

CONCEPTUALISING CUSTOMERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: AN ACTIVITY-THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

HELI KAATRAKOSKI

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**CONCEPTUALISING CUSTOMERS IN THE PUBLIC
SECTOR:**

An Activity-theoretical analysis

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ASIAKKAAN KÄSITTEELLISTÄMINEN JULKISELLA SEKTORILLA: toiminnan teoreettinen analyysi

Tiivistelmä

Asiakkuusajattelun korostaminen ja palvelujen käyttäjien käsitteellistäminen asiakkaina on viime vuosikymmenien aikana yleistynyt julkisella sektorilla sekä Suomessa että muualla maailmassa. Väitöskirjatyössäni tarkastelen asiakas -käsitteen ilmenemistä ja kehittymistä neljässä julkisen sektorin organisaatiossa Suomessa. Tutkimukseni lähtökohta on uuden julkisjohtamisen (New Public Management) ideologia ja julkisen sektorin markkinamuotoistuminen, jotka ovat myötävaikuttaneet asiakas -käsitteen kehittymiseen julkiselle sektorille. Uusi julkisjohtamisen ideologia painottaa liiketoimintamallien tuomia etu julkisen sektorin toiminnassa. Työssäni käsitteen kehittymistä tarkastellaan tässä nimenomaisessa kulttuurisessa ja historiallisessa kontekstissa. Aiemmat kansainväliset tutkimukset ovat nostaneet esiin julkisen sektorin asiakas – käsitteeseen liittyviä haasteita sekä huolta siitä, että asiakasajattelulla on syvällisempiä yhteiskunnallisia vaikutuksia kuin mitä virallisissa diskursseissa esitetään.

Tutkimukseni teoreettinen viitekehys on kulttuurihistoriallinen toiminnan teoria ja keskeisiä käsitteitä ovat kohde ja ristiriidat. Kohteen käsite mahdollistaa analyysin asiakkaista työn keskiössä ja ristiriidan käsite analyysin työssä esiintyvien jännitteiden synnystä. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu vuosina 2004–2010 tehdystä haastattelusta (53) ja kolmelta vuosikymmeneltä kerätyistä dokumenteista (42) kustakin organisaatiosta. Tutkittavien organisaatioiden toimialat ovat vanhusten kotihoito, lasten päivähoito, tienpito sekä yliopiston kirjastotoimi.

Dokumenttianalyysin tulokset osoittavat, että kaikissa tutkittavissa organisaatioissa asiakas-käsitteen käyttö on lisääntynyt samanaikaisesti uuden julkisjohtamisen oppien käyttöönoton myötä. Haastatteluaineistossa tulkintoja asiakkaista työn kohteena ilmaistaan ensinnäkin seuraavilla diskursseilla: dynaaminen diskurssi, mahdollistava diskurssi, vakiinnuttamiskurssi sekä aktiivisuus ja passiivisuus diskurssi. Toiseksi asiakkaita käsitteellistetään sosiaalisen ja ajallisen ekspansion kautta. Kiinnostaviksi tulokseksi nousevat erilaiset ristiriitatilanteet, joita työntekijät kuvailevat tapahtuvan päivittäisissä työtoiminnoissa. Ristiriitatilanteet viittaavat dominoiviin ”vanhoihin” organisaatorakenteisiin ja käytäntöihin, jotka eivät ole kehittyneet asiakkuusajattelun myötä. Ristiriitatilanteiden lisäksi kiinnostava löydös on asiakkuuteen liittyvät yhteiset diskurssit, jotka ilmenevät aineistossa tutkittavien organisaatioiden erilaisista toimialoista huolimatta. Yhteiset diskurssit ovat tulkintani mukaan merkki paitsi asiakas -käsitteen myös uuden julkisjohtamisen oppien abstrahoitumisesta ja yleistymisestä julkisella sektorilla. Abstrahoitumisella tarkoitan tässä yleisesti hyväksyttyä vallitsevaa tilaa, jota ei suuressa määrin kyseenalaisteta.

Tulkintani mukaan julkisen sektorin asiakas -käsitteen ydin on yksityisen sektorin yksilöllisyyttä ja valinnanvapautta korostavasta ihmiskäsitys sekä julkisen sektorin kollektiivista hyvää tuottava kansalaisuusajattelu. Näiden erilaisten näkökulmien kohdatessa asiakas -käsitteessä syntyy erilaisia työhön liittyviä ristiriitatilanteita, mutta myös mahdollisuuksia käsitteen kehittymiselle. Väitöskirjatyöni avaa teoreettisesti asiakas -käsitteen taustaideologiaa julkisen sektorin

markkinamuotoistumisen kontekstissa, ja samalla valottaa käynnissä olevia yhteiskunnallisia muutoksia. Tutkimus tuottaa uusia avauksia julkisen sektorin asiakkuusajatteluun liittyvään empiiriseen tutkimukseen, jota lähestytään työntekijöiden näkökulmasta. Vastaavanlainen tutkimus on Suomessa ollut vähäistä. Yksi tärkeä työntutkimukseen ja käytännön työtoimintaan liittyvä kontribuutio työssäni on ristiriitatilanteiden johtaminen systeemisistä jännitteistä sen sijaan että niiden syitä pyrittäisiin selittämään yksilötason käyttäytymisellä. Tämän tutkimuksen uudet asiakkuusajatteluun ja uuteen julkisjohtamiseen liittyvät avaukset luovat oppimishaasteita paitsi työntekijöille ja johtotasolle, myös julkisen sektorin asiakkaille ja kansalaisille. Ne haastavat meitä kaikkia reflektoimaan tutkimuksen tuloksia omiin kokemuksiimme ja toimintatapoihimme sekä julkisen sektorin toimintaan yleisesti.

Avainsanat: julkinen sektori, asiakas, työelämä, toiminnan teoria, uusi julkisjohtaminen

Heli Kaatrakoski

CONCEPTUALISING CUSTOMERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR:

An Activity-theoretical Analysis

Abstract

In the public sector, an emphasis on a customer approach, as well as approaches related to citizens, patients, students, and parents, has grown over the past few decades. This in turn has spread to a number of fields of work in Finland. This thesis investigates the conveyance and development of the concept of customer in four Finnish public organisations. The point of departure for the study is the marketisation of the public sector and the New Public Management (NPM) ideology, which emphasise the benefits of business models in public sector practices. The introduction of the concept of customer is an example of such benefits, and the development of the concept is examined in this particular cultural and historical context. Previous international studies have raised challenges related to customer thinking in the public sector and concerns over official discourses that seem to simplify the fundamental societal implications produced by the customer approach.

The theoretical framework of my study is cultural-historical activity theory. The activity-theoretical concept of an object enables the analysis of customers as the core of work. Work-related tensions which have been initiated by the marketisation of the public sector are analysed through the concept of contradiction. The data comprises interviews (53) and documents (42) from each organisation. The studied organisations represent fields of elderly care, children's day care, road management, and academic library work.

The findings in the document analysis suggest that in all the studied organisations, the use of the concept of customer has increased along with the introduction of the NPM doctrine. In the interviews, interpretations of customers as the object of work are expressed, first, by using the following discourses: dynamic, possibility, stabilisation, active, and passive discourses. Second, customers are conceptualised by expressions of the social and temporal expansion of customers. One interesting finding is the variety of conflicting situations which the interviewees experienced regularly in their service encounters. These conflicting situations are related to dominating 'old' organisational structures and practices, which have not developed sufficiently with regard to customer thinking. In addition to these conflicting situations, another interesting finding was shared discourses which were related to the customer approach. Shared discourses are a sign of the abstraction of the concept of customer as well as the NPM approach. Abstraction means here a generally accepted dominant status quo that is not widely questioned.

My interpretation in this study is that at the core of the concept of the public sector customer are the opposing forces of the private sector's understanding of human beings as responsible individuals with free choice and the public sector's emphasis on collective citizenship and the public good. The opposing forces produce not only a variety of conflicting situations, but also possibilities for the development of the concept.

This thesis theoretically opens up the background ideology behind the concept of customer in the public sector and thus increases the understanding of larger ongoing societal changes. The study

provides new openings in regard to empirical studies on customer thinking from the perspective of employees. Such research objectives have been limited in number in the Finnish context. One important contribution of this study in regard to studies of working life is its explanation of the origin of conflicting situations from systemic tensions instead of trying to trace their origins to the behaviour of individuals.

My study provides new perspectives regarding customer thinking and the NPM in Finland. It also reveals and creates new learning challenges not only for employees and management, but also for customers and citizens. This thesis challenges all of us to reflect on the findings of this study with regard to our own experiences in service encounters and public sector practices in general.

Keywords: public sector, customer, working life, activity theory, new public management

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I dedicate this book to my family, wishing them many exciting learning experiences in the future!

“If you feel safe in the area you’re working in, you’re not working in the right area. Always go a little further into the water than you feel you’re capable of being in. Go a little bit out of your depth. And when you don’t feel that your feet are quite touching the bottom, you’re just about in the right place to do something exciting.”

David Bowie

Helsinki

31 January 2016

Heli Kaatrakoski

CONTENTS

PART I: INTRODUCTION	1
1. REORGANISING THE PUBLIC SECTOR BY FOLLOWING THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IDEOLOGY	3
1.1. Historical background of the New Public Management	5
1.2. Private sector and public sector customers	9
2. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON PUBLIC SECTOR CUSTOMERS AND THIS STUDY ...	15
2.1. Primarily theoretical studies on public sector customers.....	15
2.2. Primarily empirical studies on public sector customers	19
2.3. Positioning the study within the literature on public sector customers	27
2.4. Research questions.....	30
PART II: THEORETICAL RESOURCES, RESEARCH CONTEXT, AND DATA ANALYSIS	32
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	33
3.1. Cultural historical activity theory	34
3.2. Mediation	36
3.3. Object-oriented activity	37
3.4. Contradictions as a source of development	38
3.5. Concepts and conceptualisation within the dialectical perspective of ascending from the abstract to the concrete.....	39
3.5.1. Dialectical concepts	39
3.5.2. Everyday concepts and scientific concepts	40
4. RESEARCH CONTEXT.....	43
4.1. The four organisations in the study.....	43
4.1.1. Overview of the four organisations.....	46
4.2. The two research projects in the study.....	48
4.3. Historical background of the four fields of work in the study.....	50

4.3.1. Development of elderly care in Finland	51
4.3.2. Development of day care in Finland	53
4.3.3. Development of road building, maintenance, and management in Finland.....	56
4.3.4. Development of academic library work in Finland	59
4.3.5. Summary	62
5. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND THE DATA	64
5.1. Analysing discourse.....	64
5.2. Interview data collection.....	66
5.3. Organisation of the interview data.....	69
5.4. The intermediate conceptual dimensions.....	71
5.5. Historical documents	73
PART III: EMPIRICAL ANALYSES	76
6. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CUSTOMERS IN THE FOUR FIELDS OF WORK.....	77
6.1. Customers in elderly care in the City of Espoo	77
6.2. Customers in day care in the City of Tampere	82
6.3. Customers in the Finnish Road Administration.....	86
6.4. Customers in the Helsinki University Library.....	91
6.5. Conclusions.....	95
CONCEPT OF CUSTOMER AT THE CORE OF WORK.....	97
7.1. Customer discourse.....	97
7.2. Conceptual framework.....	97
7.3. Analytical tool	98
7.4. Dynamic, stabilising, and possibility discourse.....	100
7.5. Conclusions.....	113
8. CONCEPTUALISING CUSTOMERS AS EVALUATORS OF SERVICES	118
8.1. Customers as evaluators discourse	118

8.2. Conceptual framework and the analytical tool for active and passive discourse ..	119
8.3. Active and passive customer discourse	120
8.4. Conceptual framework and the analytical tool for dynamic and stabilising discourse	125
8.5. Dynamic and stabilising customer discourse	126
8.6. Conclusions.....	131
9. POSSIBILITIES OF EXPANSION OF THE CONCEPT OF CUSTOMER	134
9.1. Expansion of the concept of customer	134
9.2. Conceptual framework.....	135
9.3. Analytical tool.....	136
9.4. Social and temporal expansion of the concept of customer.....	137
9.5. Conclusions.....	152
PART IV: DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION OF THE STUDY	157
10. DISCUSSION.....	158
10.1. Development of public sector customers.....	158
10.2. Changes in the object of work	160
10.3. Conflicting situations.....	163
10.4. Shared discourses.....	166
10.5. Evaluation of the study from theoretical and methodological perspectives	168
10.6. Evaluation of the study from a practical perspective.....	170
10.7. Future implications	171
11. REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND EVALUATION OF THE STUDY	173
REFERENCES	179
APPENDICES	192

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Positioning of organisations within the framework of marketisation.....	47
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Characteristics of the New Public Management and theoretical approaches.....	8
Table 2. The number of interviews in each studied organisation.....	68
Table 3. Number of interviews and quotations about customers	70
Table 4. Table of codes for customers and the number of quotations connected to each organisation	71
Table 5 .Summary of development of elderly care in Finland and the concept of customer in the City of Espoo.....	81
Table 6. Summary of the development of day care in Finland and the concept of customer in the City of Tampere.....	84
Table 7. Summary of the development of road building, maintenance and management in Finland and the concept of customer in the Finnish Road Administration	90
Table 8. Summary of the development of academic libraries in Finland and the concept of customer at the Helsinki University Library	93
Table 9. Stabilising, dynamic, and possibility discourse analytical tool.....	99
Table 10. The distribution of coded quotations of stabilising, dynamic, and possibility discourse in each organisation.....	111
Table 11. Active and passive evaluator customer analytical tool	120
Table 12. Stabilising and dynamic discourse analytical tool	126
Table 13. Summary of coded quotations of active, passive, stabilising, and dynamic customer discourses.....	130
Table 14. Analytical tool for social and temporal expansion.....	136
Table 15. The distribution of coded quotations of social and temporal expansion of customers in each studied organisation	150
Table 16. Possibilities of expansion of the concept of customer in each studied organisation	152

PART I: INTRODUCTION

In the public sector, emphasis on a customer approach, as well as relating to citizens and service-users as customers, has grown increasingly over the past few decades. This in turn has spread to a number of fields of work in Finland (Koskiahho, 2008). The introduction of a customer approach is connected to larger changes in public sector organisations, which are related to demands to rationalise service production. The objectives of reorganisation and rationalisation include providing good quality customer-oriented services by imitating private sector practices. To achieve these aims, a neoliberal ideology and the New Public Management approach emphasising the strengths of free markets and business thinking have been widely introduced to the public sector in Finland and worldwide (e.g. Hood, 1991; Needham, 2006; Patomäki, 2007; Yliaska, 2014). International studies, however, have suggested that implementation of new tools and concepts, such as the concept of customer adopted from business environments, may create confusion and conflicts in daily work practices. Also, findings have revealed an imbalance between customer discourse and conveying a customer approach (Clarke & Newman, 2007; Fountain, 2001).

This study focuses on exploring how the concept of customer has historically developed in the public sector and how it is conveyed in the discourse of employees in four public sector organisations in Finland. The study is based on two research and development projects which employed the theoretical and methodological frame of cultural-historical activity theory. The organisations studied represent elderly care, day care, road building, maintenance, management, and academic library work. I investigate the development of the concept of customer and the challenges related to customer approach by utilising the theoretical concepts of object and contradiction. My research, thus, stems from practical challenges in organisational settings and aims to understand and theoretically explain the challenges identified.

This study is divided into four parts. The first (Part I, Introduction) forms the societal basis for and introduction to the topic of my study. Since this study explores the concept of public sector customer in the framework of cultural-historical activity, it strongly emphasises historicity. Hence, it presents a rather extensive review of neoliberalism and the New Public Management approach at the beginning of the first chapter. The first chapter of Part I begins by introducing neoliberalism and the New Public Management. Presenting the origin and development of the New Public Management can help in understanding the customer approach and its relation to wider societal developments. It can also help to reveal the sources of challenges experienced in local work settings.

The chapter continues by exploring in more depth the differences between private sector and public sector customers and the implications of the customer approach in the public sector. The second chapter begins with studies on public sector customers and customer orientation in different contexts across various countries. Based on the review, I have positioned my study within the literature on public sector customers, and I end chapter with the four research questions.

The second part (Part II, Theoretical resources, research context, and data analysis) first presents the theoretical foundations of the research in the third chapter. The fourth chapter introduces the context of the study: the research sites and research projects for data

collection, and a historical review of the four fields of work under investigation. The fifth chapter introduces the methods of analysis and the data.

The third part (Part III, Empirical analyses) comprises four chapters on the findings and empirical analyses. Each chapter focuses on one of the research questions. The sixth chapter discusses the analyses and findings of the historical analysis and the development of the concept of customer in each organisation. The seventh chapter focuses on analyses of customers as the core of work while the eighth chapter presents findings on the conceptualisation of customers as evaluators of services. The ninth chapter examines the expansion of the concept of customers.

The fourth part (Part IV, Discussion and evaluation of the study) summarises the findings and in the tenth chapter discusses the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of the study. Finally, the final eleventh chapter assesses the research process and related ethical issues.

1. REORGANISING THE PUBLIC SECTOR BY FOLLOWING THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IDEOLOGY

During the last three decades the public sector in Finland has been under extensive reforms in regard to the implementation of new tools and concepts adopted from private sector theories and practices. Economic problems and lack of resources have created pressures for public sector organisations in Finland and a number of other Western countries to become not only more rationalised, efficient, and less bureaucratic, but also more accountable, customer-oriented and flexible. International agents such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation OECD, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the EU have made a substantial contribution to the change initiatives (Bevir, Rhodes, & Weller, 2003; Eräsaari, 2006; Koskiahio, 2008).

It is claimed that neoliberalism and the New Public Management (NPM) approach, also known as marketisation, modernisation, managerialism, or corporatisation (Almqvist, 2004; Hood, 1991; Patomäki, 2007) strongly support the changes described above. The New Public Management medicine for overcoming the challenges of diminishing financial resources has been to imitate the private sector's business principles and management styles. Thus, primacy has been put on, for instance, strong managerial positions and the results of practice instead of the processes of practice (Hood, 1991). Also, customers' needs and customers' choices in public service provision have received more attention with the aim to provide better services for citizens and to be more responsiveness to them (Koskiahio, 2008, pp. 171-172; Vigoda, 2002). Practical actions for implementing the New Public Management include: decentralisation, privatisation, incorporation, deregulation, contracting, outsourcing, creating internal markets, purchaser-providers splits, public-private partnerships (PPPs), private finance initiatives (PFI), compulsory competitive tendering actions, voucher systems, and net budgeting. In short, in the words of Lähdesmäki and Almqvist, the objective of the reforms has been to move towards more economic, efficient, and effective services (three Es) (Lähdesmäki, 2003, p. 66) by competing, controlling, and contracting (three Cs) (Almqvist, 2004).

The implications of the neoliberal New Public Management implementations in the public sector have evoked political debate for and against such development, including discussions on its benefits and disadvantages. In regard to wider societal processes, David Harvey (2005, pp. 154-155) argued that, despite positive impacts of neoliberalism, such as reduction of inflation, there has also been worldwide criticism against the ideology. Harvey himself reported on 'catastrophic losses' in the form of decline in male life expectancy, increase in poverty and informal employment, stagnation, and lack of positive change. At organisational and national levels the debates are connected to, for instance: tensions between performance evaluation and organisational learning, cost savings and public sector ethos, the focus on results and focus on processes, and the role of customers and citizens (Emery & Giauque, 2005; Grimshaw, Willmot & Rubery, 2005, p. 58; Hebson, Grimshaw, & Marchington, 2003; Kettunen & Möttönen, 2011, p. 58; Needham, 2006).

As indicated, the implementation of commercial principles and managerial procedures has raised several questions concerning the development of society, organisations, and employment. Harvey (2005) argued that the Public Private Partnership model has faced

strong criticism among its opponents, who claim that following the model leads to an unsustainable situation in which governments carry the risks of activities whereas private companies collect the profits. He also claimed that a collaborative partnership between governmental agents and private firms may not be beneficial for both parties, since private companies have increasingly more power in 'writing legislation, determining public policies, and setting regulatory frameworks (which are mainly advantageous to themselves)' (Harvey, 2005, pp. 76-77).

Regarding partnership models, Koskiahio (2008, p. 71) referred to Maureen Mackintosh (1992) and her concerns about their objective. According to her, the models seem to encourage the development of civil society toward an entrepreneurial society in which the aim of learning processes is to transform citizens into self-controlling agents. Also, neoliberalism may question the public sector ethos, which may initiate 'inherent contradictions' through 'differentiation-integration', and thus have implications for the professional identity, motivation, and involvement of the employees (Emery & Giaque 2005, pp. 639; 648).

In Finland, authorities and politicians have followed international trends, utilised the knowledge of international consultant companies, and eventually implemented models of the New Public Management mainly from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia (Kallio, 2014; Lähdesmäki, 2003; Patomäki, 2007; Yliaska, 2014). Hence, a number of public sector reforms have been conducted in Finland since the end of the 1980s by following the ideas of neoliberalism and the New Public Management. Interest in the purchaser-provider split model, for example, can be identified in governmental and municipal organisations in the 1990s and 2000s. In the City of Tampere the model appeared on the political agenda at the beginning of the 1990s, but was abandoned for some years. Later, in 2007, the purchaser-provider split was fully implemented. In 2001 the National Board of Public Roads was split into a provider organisation, the Finnish Road Enterprise (now Destia, which was privatised in 2014), and a purchaser organisation, the Finnish Road Administration. Finnish universities have increasingly implemented management by results tools since the late 1980s, thus giving way to an approach in which knowledge creation is understood as being similar the production of any other commodity. In relation to management by results, a new salary system based on performance was implemented in 2006 and the new university law in 2010. The new law included a financing model which emphasised the quality and effectiveness of academic work (Kallio, 2014). These are only a few examples; similar movements toward using managerial tools and organisational models can be identified across the public sector in Finland.

Koskiahio (2008 pp. 180-181) criticised the way decision makers in Finland had promoted neoliberal practices without questioning the benefits (see also Fountain, 2001; Clarke & Newman, 2007; Patomäki, 2007). Koskiahio argued that by the early 1990s the United Kingdom, for instance, had already abandoned the simplistic model of purchaser-provider split because of its weak competitive performance. Also, Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler (2006, p. 468) pointed out that within two decades the New Public Management had 'died in the water' in the countries where it was first implemented. Concern has now been voiced regarding the relevance and success of the New Public Management initiatives in Finland as well. Recently, critical questions regarding the purchaser-provider split and customer approach have been raised in the City of Tampere.

Reforms conducted by the New Public Management approach seem to be extensive at many levels and thus have initiated changes in the nature of the traditional Finnish welfare society (Kantola & Kautto, 2002; Saari, 2005). Furthermore, the change in the public sector

can be identified through the emergence of new boundary-crossing organisations (about boundary-crossing see e.g., Kerosuo, 2006), networking, and a number of other new ways of organising work. However, new organisational forms not only blur the boundaries of organisations, but also the boundaries between managers and workers, products and services, production and consumption, employees and customers, and practice and knowledge (du Gay, 1996; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996, p. 68). It has also been argued that the purchaser-provider split, the basic mode of the New Public Management, changes ‘the traditional hierarchical structure in organisations, relations between agents, steering processes and the whole logic of such activity’ (Meklin, 2006, pp. 22-23). On a wider scale, a change is underway in the societal division of labour between the public, private, and third sectors (Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009). Hence, neoliberalism seems to be pervasive as the ideology that will ‘alter the ontology of the market’ as well as ‘revise the very conception of society’ (Lave, Mirowski, & Randalls, 2010, p.662).

1.1. Historical background of the New Public Management

The New Public Management has its roots in neoliberalism and the theory of political economy, putting primacy on individual free choice, entrepreneurial freedom, and free markets, which are not regulated by the state. Neoliberalism is a product of the Mont Pelerin Society, founded in 1947. Its first president, Friedrich von Hayek, was one of the fathers of the ideology. The first concrete neoliberal steps were taken in Chile in the 1970s with the help of the Chicago School practitioners (Lave, Mirowski, & Randalls, 2010, p. 661). The movement of systematic neoliberal New Public Management ideas and initiatives began in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, New Zealand, and Australia. In Finland the new era was claimed to have begun in the 1980s when the money markets were deregulated and political decision makers started ‘obediently to follow’ international trends regarding public sector reforms (Patomäki, 2007, p. 12).

Whether the New Public Management is ‘a new theoretical paradigm’ (Lane, 2000, p. 3), ‘a trend towards the use of new management tools’ (Emery & Giauque 2003, p. 469), a doctrine (Temmes, 1998, p. 441), a philosophy (Hood & Jackson, 1991, pp. 14-15) or ideology (Lähdesmäki, 2004, p. 11) is still under discussion. Emery & Giauque (2003) and Gruening (2001), for instance, do not accept the New Public Management as a new paradigm, even though the main principles and tools are shared in various countries. Lane (2000, p. 3) argues that the New Public Management is a theory:

New Public Management (NPM) is the theory of the most recent paradigm change in how the public sector is to be governed. Initiated in the United Kingdom, it spread to first and foremost the United States, Australia and especially New Zealand, and then further on to Scandinavia and Continental Europe. NPM is part of the managerial revolution that has gone around the world, affecting all countries, although to considerably different degrees. The theory of new public management contains the insights from game theory and from the disciplines of law and economics.

Gruening (2001, p. 19) refers to Kuhn's concept of paradigm and argues that New Public Management is not a new paradigm for the behavioural-administrative sciences, since there is no agreement a new disciplinary system. Lähdesmäki (2004) approaches the New Public Management as a doctrine guiding public sector procedures. I follow her approach in this study, meaning that the New Public Management is understood as a group of principles guiding actions towards better public management (Lähdesmäki 2004, p. 11).

According to Gruening (2001), two approaches are argued to be the most influential in the development of the New Public Management. The first is the public-choice theory and the second is managerialism, which has its roots in scientific management approach. In addition, Gruening (*ibid.*, p. 17) has listed a number of other theories as having influenced the development of the New Public Management: management theory, classical public administration, neoclassical public administration, policy analysis, principal-agent theory, property-rights theory, the neo-Austrian school, transaction-cost economics, and new public administration.

Despite generally shared aims and realisations of the reforms, there is no basic model for the New Public Management tools and processes. Neither is there a definition or concurrence for the term the New Public Management (Emery & Giaque, 2003, p. 469; Lähdesmäki, 2004, p. 60). The advantage of the term is argued to be its ability to define general change and managerial principles in public sector organisations in a number of Western countries (Hood, 1991). However, some main principles behind the New Public Management can be summed up: professional management in the public sector, explicit standards and measures of performance, greater output controls, shift to disaggregation of units, shift to greater competition, emphasis on private-sector styles of management practice, emphasis on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use (Hood 1991, pp. 4-5).

Emery and Giaque (2003, p. 469) have abstracted the main principles of the New Public Management as follows: emphasis from inputs and processes to outputs and outcomes, measurement-based standards, leaner, flatter and more autonomous organisations, emphasis on market and market-like mechanisms (privatisation, contracting out, internal markets, boundary-crossing and hybrid organisations (PPP's), and values on efficiency and individualism instead of equity, security and universalism.

Similarly, Gruening (2001) has analysed main characteristics of the New Public Management (Table 1) based partly on his analysis of the public administration development in the United States. The analysis began with a systematic study of public administration in the late 18th century and resulted in seven phases:

1. Classical public administration (end of 1800 – beginning of 1900)
 - Based on the ideas of Taylorism, scientific management, active state, and objective knowledge
 - Principles of division of labour, homogeneity, unity of command, efficiency, hierarchy, accountability, and control
2. Neoclassical public administration (after the Second World War)
 - Behaviourism, structural functionalism and systems theory
 - Active state, objective knowledge
 - Shift from bureaucratic management style towards analytical and rational management

3. Public Choice (1960-1970)
 - Individualism, free choice, free markets, and contracting
4. New Public Administration (1960-1980)
 - Human-relations school, self-actualizing man (Maslow), democratisation, and participation
5. Policy analysis (1970)
 - Neoclassical approach, logical positivism
6. Public management (1970-1980)
 - Neoclassical approach, private sector models
 - Ideas of rational public management: gathering and analysing information in order to solve management problems; Objective measurement of performance and rewarding
 - Ideas of humanistic public management: organisation development, Total Quality Management (TQM), and culturally-oriented strategic management
7. New Public Management (1980-)
 - neoliberalism, private sector models

Gruening's summary of the main characteristics of the New Public Management is presented in the table below (Table 1). He explains that the table is not 'a complete or exhaustive' conceptualisation, but provides 'a heuristic for visualising' his analysis. Thus, it reveals in a simplified form the variety of theoretical origins which have influenced a number of the New Public Management reformers.

Table 1. Characteristics of the New Public Management and theoretical approaches

	Classical PA	Neoclassical PA	Public Choice	Austrian school	Principal-Agent	Property-Rights	Transaction Costs	NPA	Constitutionalism	Communitarism	Discourse	Policy analysis	Rational PUMA	Humanistic PUMA
Budget cuts	x	x	x	x								x	x	x
Privatisation			x	x		x				x			x	x
Separation of providers and producers			x		x		x							
Contracting out			x	x			x			x			x	x
User charges & vouchers			x										x	
Customer concept								x					x	x
Competition			x											x
Flexibility for management													x	x
Separation of politics and administration	x	x										x	x	x
Accounting for performance	x	x			x							x	x	x
Decentralisation	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x		x	x
Performance measurement	x	x			x							x	x	
Improved accounting and financial management	x	x			x								x	
Performance auditing	x	x			x								x	
Strategic planning and management		x											x	x
Management style		x						x					x	x
Personnel management					x								x	x
Use of IT														
Legal spending constrains			x											
Improved regulation			x											
Rationalisation of jurisdictions	x	x										x	x	
Rationalisation of administrative structures	x	x										x	x	
Analysis and evaluation	x	x	x	x								x	x	x
Democratisation and participation			x	x		x				x			x	x

I have now provided a scrutinised overview of the New Public Management and its historical background. As the table (Table 1) shows, one of the key concepts introduced by the New Public Management is the concept of customer, which has its roots in the New Public Administration, Rational Public Management, and Humanistic Public Management. In the following, I will give a brief introduction to customers in business and public sector settings. Further, I will illustrate how reforms initiated by the New Public Management (or related approaches) and the customer approach have influenced daily work practices in organisational settings.

1.2. Private sector and public sector customers

Who or what is a customer? In *Encyclopedia of health care management* a customer is defined: ‘A customer is an individual or entity that is the recipient of a good or service made available by a supplier or provider, usually in exchange for something of value that is generally but not always monetary in nature’ (Stahl, 2003). The word customer has its origins in ‘habitual practice’ and ‘accustom’ (Harper, 2001-2016, “customer”); a customer is a person or entity that frequently uses services of one seller, makes it a habit. The seller aims to keep the relationship with the customer, keep the ‘custom’. The customer may not be the end user of the good or service, but it can be a wholesaler or retailer (Stahl, 2003)¹. Consumer (a person or thing that consumes) is often synonymous with customer, which is incorrect. Rather, consumer is a particular type of customer and the term is rarely used in connection with services. Consumer is always an end user of purchases whereas customer is not (Stahl, 2003). Recently, the use of the term consumer has been connected to public services as well as the consumerist model of public service provision (Newman & Vidler, 2006).

The term client is related to the term customer. Who or what is a client? The term client originates from Latin: *cliens* meaning dependent and *cluere* meaning hear and obey. In Roman antiquity a client was a person under the guardianship and protection of another of superior rank and influence, patron. Client’s interests were represented by another (Fowler, Fowler, & Thompson, 1995; Chambers 21st Century Dictionary, 1996; Harper, 2001-2016, “client”). Later client was defined as someone consulting a lawyer, architect, social worker or other professional person (Fowler, Fowler, & Thompson, 1995; Chambers 21st Century Dictionary, 1996).

In contemporary discourse the term is often associated with the post-war welfare state model (Needham, 2006, p. 848); a client is ‘the subject of professional attention and indicates a kind of moral responsibility and obligation’ (McClure, 2010, p. 13). The term client has replaced the terms patient, unemployed, and student, for instance, and recently, the term customer has been used more frequently referring to a client. Stahl (2003) explains that a customer buys a good or service, but usually in everyday language a customer purchases products, whereas a client purchases services. And more specifically, clients are usually receivers of services rather than purchasers of services and are under protection of somebody. Therefore a customer has more choice than a client when using and buying services.

Customers have long been a subject of research in business, marketing, and management literature (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Normann, 2001; Storckbacka & Lehtinen, 2001; see also Pirkkalainen, 2003). The concept of customer in the public sector originates from private

¹ Going back in history, the meaning of the word customer was a prostitute (Harper, 2001-2016, “customer”).

sector practices, therefore I briefly introduce here one conceptualisation of customers in business environments. I chose to use the work of Storbacka and Lehtinen (2001) for the introduction, since they have explored the *development* of the concept of customer, and thus shown the dynamics of the concept. They also illustrate the importance of larger societal processes in the concept development by relating this development to changes in modes of production. Also, they relate the development to changes in modes of production therefore understanding the importance of larger societal processes in regard to the concept development.

Traditionally in business settings a customer is a participant in an event of purchase. A customer who loyally purchases products is a regular customer (Storbacka & Lehtinen 2001, p. 6). In regard to the public sector context, the concept of regular customer is unclear and grasping its meaning can be difficult, for instance, in the day care context (see Korunka et al., 2007, p. 309). Storbacka and Lehtinen (2001, pp. 3-5) explored the origins of marketing activities in order to understand the development of customer relationship management (CRM). They illustrate presented the development of CRM by following the development of modes of work within capitalist society (see also Victor & Boynton, 1998). In the first craftwork phase, craftsmen, artisans, and apprentices lived and worked close to their customers and knew each of them personally. Thus, craftsmen were familiar with their customers' needs as well as customers' requirements regarding needed products. Relevant information and knowledge of the products were stored in a craftsmen's memory. Along with industrialisation at the end of the 19th century, the mode of production began moving toward large scale mass production. Former artisans and craftsmen became increasingly managers in factories and those working with products on assembly lines did not encounter customers or understand their needs. The mass production phase initiated the birth of the marketing era, which first began by developing distribution channels for products. The distance between those working on products in factories and customers purchasing them did not disappear. Also, marketing activities were often managed by separate, isolated marketing departments, which led to more fragmented practices. According to Storbacka and Lehtinen (ibid. p. 5), the contemporary trend is for the marketing of services to view 'the whole organisation as a marketing organisation': this provides a better understanding of customer relationships, and brings customers closer to producers.

Storbacka and Lehtinen (2001, p. 5) approached the relationship between customers and providers as a value creation process. Both customers and providers create value for themselves. This means that 'both parties adopt their processes to each other in a way that creates value for both'. Also, providers 'help the customers create value for themselves'. Such an approach, in my view, refers to a win-to-win situation, which can be identified, for instance, in contemporary partnership discourse in both the private and public sectors.

In the public sector, the concepts of customer and customer orientation as the business world conceptualises them are relatively new. Yet, the concepts of customer and customer orientation are here to stay at least in the language of public sector management (Paarlberg, 2007, p. 227). Using these concepts is not 'only' managerial jargon, but expresses deeper objectives in the society (Fountain, 2001, p. 56).

In the public sector the concept of customer is a multi-dimensional concept referring to the general public, which includes organisational customers or individual consumers, service-users, citizens, clients, stakeholders, or taxpayers. Thus, the public sector services are to be beneficial for both an individual and a wider public. Further, the concept holds in itself a number of theories and philosophies having different and even opposing ontological assumptions of human beings (Gruering, 2001; Kettunen & Möttönen, 2011, p. 57-58).

Introducing such a concept to employees as well as service-users and citizens in the context of changing work settings and organisational reforms, it can be challenging for them to grasp and understand the meaning and implications of the new concept.

Unlike in English, Finnish does not distinguish between the terms of customer and client (in Finnish: asiakas). Therefore referring to individuals or entities purchasing products or services, receiving services, or needing protection, for instance, is expressed by using the same term in the Finnish language. In English the terms client and customer are often used as synonyms even though they have originally opposing meanings and therefore they conflict with each other.

In this study I chose to use the concept of customer following the contemporary 'political and management discourse' (Emery & Giaque, 2005, p. 648) and the Finnish way of using the concept. Thus, here a customer refers to a customer or client, regardless of whether they purchase and/or receive services/products or have a choice or not. Further, the main subject of this study is an individual or a group of individuals using services provided by public sector organisations.

Customers in new organisational settings in the public sector

The New Public Management implementations and other organisational reforms can have profound effects on the character of work. Typical for reforms initiated by the New Public Management approach is that new kinds of split, divided, or fragmented organisations with blurred boundaries emerge, thus changing the nature of work practices. Work may become more complex and very different from what it used to be. Historically evolved tensions and contradictions may arise and be noticeable in day-to-day routines (Engeström, 1987; Grimshaw, Willmot & Rubery, 2005, p. 60). In the British context a publication *Fragmenting Work. Blurring Organisational Boundaries and Disordering Hierarchies* (2005) edited by Mick Marchington, Damian Grimshaw, Jill Rubery and Hugh Willmott introduced studies on more than 50 work places in Great Britain, putting primacy on the fragmenting character of reorganised public and private sector organisations. They examined the management of employment, the impact of contractual relations on work and employment, and employees' experiences in boundary-crossing organisations. The findings suggested that from the perspective of employees the activities may become fragmented and unequal and the idea of work may be less secure and more individual. Similar findings were reported in the Finnish context by Kovalainen and Österberg (Kovalainen & Österberg, 2000, pp. 80-81) and by du Gay (1996) in the United Kingdom. Kalliola and Nakari (2006, p. 35) argued that the New Public Management model has a rational and linear view of the world and it undermines the balance between productivity, customers and employees. In other words, the New Public Management stresses the point of view of the organisations (productivity) and services (customers) while at the same time it undermines the quality of working life (employees).

The findings above indicate that increasing customer focus, as initiated by the New Public Management approach, is likely to affect one way or another work practices in the public sector. Customer focus and new kinds of working methods may cause tensions at work on a daily basis. One example is customers' participation in service production, which despite being positive can also create conflicts between employees and customers due to demands for flexibility and customer orientation. In a health care context doctors may overtreat patients if they have noted that it avoids conflicts with patients or their next of kin.

Sometimes the challenges can be connected to organisational tools and operations which are not orchestrated to support customer approach.

Below are four excerpts from this study which reflect changes in contemporary work practices from the employees' perspective. In the first example, a librarian gives a positive description of how he has been able to provide services to one customer in a customer-oriented way. He seems, however, to be somewhat uncertain about the boundaries of his work tasks.

And the other one is this that I consulted with the doctoral student and helped with the paper. She wanted to report on how she has searched for information. And I read the article, at least the part which concerned the information search and I commented on the text and so on. These kinds of services we haven't had earlier, but they are increasing. And I could imagine that has to do with the data management plans. I guess we should have... Well, how does this affect your work in the future? I haven't really thought about that, but these are the questions that affect it in a way that... I don't know if we need to do this or not. But I was happy when the doctoral student sent the text and I read it and was able to comment. But I don't know if this goes beyond our services... b3h

The New Public Management approach has motivated academic libraries to develop and reframe their priorities and position in regard to services provided for researchers and research group customers. Librarians, instead of being reactive and passive, are expected to be more proactive and familiar with research work, and thus better able to serve their customers and response to their needs (Hansson & Johannesson, 2013). The excerpt above showed that the librarian was on the 'right track' in his efforts, yet lacked understanding of the rules or boundaries of services encounters.

The second example is from elderly care in the City of Espoo. The interviewee explained how outsourcing of services and changes in such activities has affected the daily practices of elderly care workers. She indicated a need to serve their customers with new methods, new ways of thinking, and fewer resources, which may or may not have led to better customer service.

Well, we can see it in our own production this year in a way, that even though the outsourcing has decreased, we still have to produce the services for our customers. This means that our employees do the same job that the contractors did earlier. And we have had to change our own methods of working and think in a new way that we can do the same job with fewer resources. AH6

The third excerpt is from the day care context in the City of Tampere. Two interviewees explain how their daily work is like 'piecing together a jigsaw' based on customers' needs. On the one hand, customer-oriented ways of responding to customers' needs can be noted in the excerpt. But on the other hand, the tailor-style working method seemed to have created stress for day care employees.

In practice it may mean, that when a child comes in the morning, we check that this place is free today, there you can eat and here you can leave your jacket. And then where could be the place where you can rest? This creates pressures. It is 50 % of the families that make contracts. CL1

(...)

Here at our place it is very much tailored. One family buys Monday and Tuesday and then another family buys Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Or then somebody buys Monday and Friday, then Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are left for other families. That kind of tailoring is done all the time, every day. This morning I have had two cases, too. CL3

The last excerpt is from elderly care in the City of Espoo. The interviewed nurse pondered on how her work identity has changed due to changes in the organisation and work practices. The change can be identified as an expansion of work responsibilities, such as services increasingly built around customers and other participants in the care processes. The change in the core work of nursing and the position of customers have affected the nurse's professional identity.

In the beginning, when we were still under the health centre, the work was more nursing. We did those tasks and were together responsible for one area of expertise. And now it is sometimes far from it. You have to think of all the variety of responsibilities for customers. Sometimes you wonder if you are a nurse at all or if you are some other professional with nursing as a supporting job. It is the entity, thinking where the service comes from, how you start building the service with customers; this is what it demands now. And it includes a lot of guiding and advising on a daily basis. Both with employees and relatives of the customers. AH15

It is relevant to remember that organisations and workplaces are not empty shells, abstracted process pictures, or stable organisation charts. Instead, they consist of the dynamics between employees, customers, service users, service providers and other stakeholders, and the society. All of them have their own history. Thus, it is important to explore how organisational changes and new concepts are understood and experienced by employees and how employees manage and conceptualise the new kind of work in organisational settings. Whether the approach is studying customers, work practices, management, marketisation at a wider societal level (e. g. Anttonen & Meagher, 2013) or something else, the salience of studying organisational changes and new concepts cannot be denied. Further, it is argued that the New Public Management literature lacks empirical studies in the work context (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p. 683), and that the New Public Management model puts primacy on organisations/productivity and services/customers instead of working life/employees. This argument supports the relevance of studying customers in the public sector (Kalliola & Nakari, 2006, p. 35). Finally, Karsio and Anttonen (2013, pp. 85-86) argue that since the marketisation of, for instance, social services has taken place in Finland only recently, there have been few empirically based studies examining different aspects of the topic.

In this study, I approach changes in organisational settings initiated by the New Public Management procedures by focusing on the concept of customer and customer orientation. I do not intend to claim that customer orientation in public sector organisations is negative or that employees in the public sector are not or should not be willing to serve the customers and be customer-oriented. Instead, I aim to take forward a multiform and critical analysis in order to examine possible challenges in service encounters, which are initiated by the New Public Management. What guided me to take a somewhat critical approach were the tensions and conflicts identified in the conducted interviews, and which seemed to be

initiated by the customer approach. I wanted to go beyond what in my view was abstract but dominant the New Public Management discourse. Further, I argue that studying the concept of customer 'in the wild' (Engeström & Sannino, 2012) and concretising it within a systematic whole by analysing empirical data in a real-world context is an adequate way of approaching the topic. Such an approach is likely to provide important knowledge for both customers and public sector organisation representatives of how wider societal changes are experienced in local settings. After all, we are talking about rather multidimensional and complex phenomena and concepts that need to be explored. The concept of customer 'has expanded both in terms of the range of services which use the concept and in terms of its depth of influence on the structures, processes and practices through which public services are delivered' (Richter & Cornford, 2008, p. 211).

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON PUBLIC SECTOR CUSTOMERS AND THIS STUDY

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of both primarily empirical and primarily theoretical studies on the concept of public sector customers and customer orientation. My initial aim was to put primacy on studies with the objective of conceptualising public sector customers by utilising empirical data, but such studies provided by the *Google Scholar* search were few. Thus, I extended the focus to concern primarily theoretical studies, and studies exploring customer orientation in the public sector and providing, at some level, an understanding of public sector customers.

In order to delineate the field of my research topic, I conducted several searches with *Google Scholar* by using key words, such as 'public sector customer/client', 'new public management customer/client/consumer/citizen', and 'neo-liberalism customer'. The majority of the large number of publications provided by the search was not relevant for my study due to the lack of conceptualising or understanding the public sector customer. In a number of publications, customers/clients were brought into the discussion as a connection with public sector reforms and the New Public Management approach, yet they were not a focus of the research. Hence, it seemed that the New Public Management has attracted researchers in a number of countries, but studies putting central importance on the concept of customer have not gained wide popularity. After careful reading I found 13 studies to base my review on. I selected all primarily empirical studies and the most quoted primarily theoretical studies, which together, in my view, provided a capital report on of the topic.

The majority of the studies on public sector customers approached the topic by exploring the opposites of individual customers/consumers and collective citizens, or by investigating relations between customers and employees. Many of the studies deployed a critical approach toward understanding, for instance, public sector service-users, patients, or prisoners as customers, whereas some had a more positive view of public sector customers, customer orientation, and the New Public Management initiatives.

The reviewed studies delineated to some extent development of public sector customers since it was inherent within the framework of developments in marketisation and the introduction to the New Public Management. Some studies lacked an elaboration of contextual development, leaning mainly on theoretical conceptualisation and putting less or no emphasis on practice based evidence of the object under investigation. Further, a number of studies recognised tensions and conflicts in the concept of public sector customer yet did not highlight them nor theoretically explain development of the concept.

In the next sections I, first provide a review of primarily theoretical studies on public sector customers and continue by presenting primarily empirical studies. I end the chapter with conclusions on the reviewed studies and position my investigation in the context of other research in the field.

2.1. Primarily theoretical studies on public sector customers

A number of the reviewed studies discussed the concept of customer (or clients or consumer) and its conflicting relation to citizenship. The main concern of the studies covered tensions between individual rights, duties, and choice of customers and the collective goals of citizens.

Aberbach and Christensen (2005) explored theoretically the changing features of the role of citizens and the impact that increasing customer focus has had on citizenship and administrative leadership in the context of the New Public Management in the United States. They delineated the character of citizenship as developing along two lines: republican citizenship or the collective model typical of the Nordic Countries, and the individual model emphasising individuals' self-interest. The models were seen to vary depending on the extent to which rights, duties, and obligations are exercised in the society. The authors stated that introduction of the New Public Management has had a more substantial effect in countries having republican citizenship or the collective model of citizenship, since the New Public Management approach itself emphasises individual rights. However, Aberbach and Christensen recognised the possibilities of expanding the concepts of democracy and participation introduced by the New Public Management initiatives.

Aberbach and Christensen (2005) understood customers in the New Public Management framework to mean individuals who have preferences aiming at personal satisfaction, and whose preferences are satisfied by state representatives who are responsive to customers. They argued that the ideology supporting individual interest by a customer approach in the public sector may look harmless, but it is likely to be challenging for the way society, administration, and politics operate from the perspective of rights and duties.

Aberbach and Christensen's study (2005) provided an understanding of several serious problems connected to customer orientation in the public sector. At the theoretical or societal level they were concerned about a consumer or customer approach emphasising individual preferences and rights. Such an approach, the authors claimed, would not easily fit the collective tradition of citizenship, which puts primacy on collective actions and the common good. The second concern was political leaders' weakened control over administration. Although they did not present any empirical data, they identified three main problems regarding the empirical or practical implications from the perspective of citizenship. First, they raised the question of whom the government agencies should serve, who receive primary attention, and who the customers are. This challenge questioned, for instance, whether the customers of broadcasting regulators are the broadcasters or the public listening to and viewing the broadcast. Depending on the understanding of who the 'real customer' is, organisational procedures and the process of service provision may vary accordingly, and thus affect the role of citizens.

Second, Aberbach and Christensen pondered the consequences of providing better services to those with more resources or the loudest voice than to those without these resources and questioned whether such a practice suited the public sector sphere (see also Fountain, 2001 and Alford, 2002). The third practical problem they identified concerned the New Public Management approach and the way it transfers an idealised model of activities from the private sector to public sector practices. The ideology of the market aims at profit making, whereas in accordance with democratic principles, the objective of the public sector is equality and accessibility in services provision (see also Fountain, 2001).

Vigoda (2002) studied public sector customers with the aim of establishing an understanding of the relationship between government/public administration and citizens. The theoretical resources employed in his study were democratic theories, comparative political science, political economy, and theories of administrative reforms. He introduced an inherent tension in the concept of public sector customer: tension between authorities' better responsiveness to customers and effective collaboration with customers.

Vigoda (2002) identified not only a conceptual but also a practical paradox between responsiveness to citizens/customers and collaboration between these parties. Although he claimed to 'applaud the recent trend in public managerialism that fosters the manager-customer relationship', he, however, criticised the assumption that better responsiveness to citizens by conceptualising them as customers is the key to improving and developing public sector systems (*ibid.*, pp. 528-530). According to Vigoda, responsiveness is understood as a passive and unidirectional reaction to needs and demands based on a market and business ideology. Collaboration, on the other hand, represents an active and bidirectional act that emphasises the moral values of co-operation and equality. He argued that the New Public Management has detached itself from the conception of collaboration, favouring instead a concentration of power and focusing on the responsibilities of public services. Consequently, for a better understanding of the relationship between citizens and authorities more attention should be paid to the active roles of citizens and their obligations in communities.

In Vigoda's theory-based historical conceptualisation the roles of citizens in public services have evolved from being subjects toward being voters, customers/clients, partners, and, in the future, owners. The roles of public administration have developed along a continuum consisting of rulers, trustees, managers, partners, and in the future, subjects. The type of interaction between customers/clients and public administration, for its part, has evolved from coerciveness, delegation, responsiveness, and collaboration toward citizenry coerciveness in the future. Thus, in the future, as suggested by Vigoda, citizens ought to be understood as owners, public administration as a subject and the type of interaction as citizenry coerciveness. As a response to customer thinking and responsiveness, Vigoda introduced a multidimensional perspective of collaboration and partnership. The multidimensional perspective comprised administrators, citizens, and other social players, such as the media, academia, and the private and third sectors and their interrelationships.

Alford (2002) carried out a study in which he compared private and public sector customers by using the notion of exchange. He stated that the notion of exchange has limited conceptualisation in markets and business relations. He called it the 'restricted economic exchange' approach. Alford argued that in the disciplines of management and economy it is typically considered the only type of transaction, and it has now apparently become an archetype of customers for public sector reformers as well. In order to expand the notion of exchange from a strictly economic perspective, he utilised the theory of social-exchange, which has emerged from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. His contribution was the introduction of an extended notion of exchange, which included symbolic significance (status recognition), intrinsic value (respect), or moral and normative value (fairness).

In his study, Alford (2002) analysed two functions of private sector customers: expressing the preference (forming it and paying for it) and consuming the good or service (having value). Also, Alford noted that in the private sector the same person performs the primary function and consumes the service or product. In comparison, in the public sector actors involved in the transaction are, on the one hand, individual clients receiving private value, and on the other hand, collective citizens receiving public value. From the financial point of view, Alford was concerned about the imbalance in the public sector approach: different actors may choose, pay, and consume services. Taxpayers, for instance, are an example of financiers who may not use services they pay for.

Further, Alford (2002) delineated three secondary categories of clients in the public sector: paying customers, beneficiaries, and obligatees. Paying customers, for example, are similar to private sector customers who exchange money for a bus trip. Beneficiaries are 'not paying clients', who do not exchange money. Such beneficiaries are pupils in public schools. Obligatees are clients using the services against their own will, such as prisoners. Alford argued that the content and type of exchange vary among public sector customers and clients. While paying customers exchange mainly money with government organisations, for beneficiaries and obligatees the exchange is rather in the form of co-operation, compliance, and co-production of services. His example of co-production is when taxpayers carefully and promptly complete their income tax returns.

Du Gay (1996; see also du Gay & Salaman, 1992) explored the ways in which contemporary changes in working life and modes of organisational procedures initiated by the neoliberal culture of enterprise have blurred traditional differences between production and consumption identities. He utilised theoretical resources from the disciplines of consumer sociology, organisation sociology, and cultural sociology. Du Gay aimed to transcend the traditional, opposing approaches in the social sciences, in which consumption was conceptualised either as determined by production or as an inherently motivated activity divorced from production. He suggested conceptualising consumption and production as unstable overlapping relations, thus understanding employees and customers in a dynamic way as complementing rather than opposing each other.

One of the objectives of du Gay's investigation was employees' identity, which was understood as variable and unstable in relation to the context of activity. The author explained that in order to understand the production of the new work-based identity, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of organisational culture, such as enterprise culture and customer culture. By enterprise culture du Gay (1996) referred to an action or project exhibiting enterprising qualities, such as personal responsibility on the part of individuals or groups. Inherent in the enterprise culture is the objective of generalising the enterprise form to all other forms of conduct (public, third sector) despite their particularity (see also Fountain, 2001 and Aberbach & Christensen, 2005).

Du Gay was critical of enterprise culture, but recognised the importance and benefit of some implications of it, such as the aims to reduce the one-sided power of government and encourage citizens to consider the principles of public services in a new way, thus opening up a novel understanding of relations in society. In terms of workers' and managers' positions, du Gay claimed, for instance, that performance-related pay (which in his opinion was based on economics and behaviourism) might help them to see themselves 'inside' the organisation rather than 'outside'. He was concerned, however, that introducing enterprise culture, with its political and moral limits, into the public sector would undermine the ethical issues and objectives of the public good and citizenship. Further, he brought up the disquieting line of development which, along with the New Public Management initiatives, put primacy on results instead of processes in organisational procedures and work activities. By this he meant, for instance, that public servants were now responsible for meeting the set targets, whereas earlier other agents assumed this responsibility (du Gay, 1996).

Du Gay (1996) argued that constructing a culture of enterprise in Great Britain has been carried out by expanding markets and redefining the object of markets, such as a sovereign consumer or customer. Thus, along with the enterprise culture, the customer culture has also arisen with the objective of subordinating producers and employees and putting primacy on the preferences of individual consumers. The new organisation culture, as du Gay explained, meant a redefinition of what a person and an individual ought to be. Customers, for example,

were responsible, risk-taking, and free-choosing individuals searching for fulfilment and aiming to add value in their own life. He utilised the concepts of responsibilisation and autonomisation of self when delineating the changing identity of employees. The same concepts can also be used to understand 'the new customers' in the public sector:

Pathologies that were until recently represented and acted upon 'socially' – homelessness, unemployment and so forth – become re-individualized through their positioning within a new ethical vocabulary and hence subject to new and often more intense forms of surveillance and control. Because they are now represented as responsible individuals with a moral duty to take care of themselves, pathological subjects can blame no one but themselves for the problems they face. This individualization of the social is evidenced in the UK by the recent repositioning of the unemployed person as a 'job seeker' and the homeless person as a 'rough sleeper (Rose, forthcoming)' (du Gay, 1996, p. 179).

Du Gay referred above to customers being under increasing control and surveillance even though they are also regarded as autonomous individuals responsible for their own actions. Such conceptualisations can easily be found in the New Public Management approach.

Du Gay (1996) emphasised that in the enterprise and customer culture customers have become a central element in the reconstruction of private and public organisations. Citizens are understood as individual and responsible consumers and employees as autonomous individuals, thus as being under controlled de-control in flexible environments. Also, in a customer culture employees may become each other's customers, which has an impact on the boundaries between inside and outside in organisations.

In du Gay's (1996) book the evolving enterprising culture concerned private and public sector organisations equally. He explained that the reorganisation of public sector organisations is often termed as the New Public Management or entrepreneurial government, and that these organisations rely on business models in their activities. Du Gay's study examined customers in the public sector theoretically; he did not present any empirical data. The empirical part of the study and data collection were conducted in private firms, which I consider a gap in his profound elaboration regarding changes in organisational culture and the emergence of a customer culture.

So far, I have provided an overview of primarily theoretical studies on customers in the public sector. Being theoretical in nature, these studies (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005; Vigoda, 2002; Alford, 2002; du Gay, 1996) did not utilise any empirical data to provide an empirically grounded conceptualisation of public sector customers. In the following section I proceed by presenting studies in which empirical data has been utilised for a better understanding of the concept of customer in the public sector.

2.2. Primarily empirical studies on public sector customers

The studies above provided an important conceptualisation of public sector customers and customer orientation by employing theories from different disciplines. However, they did not offer an empirically grounded conceptualisation of customers.

In the following section I introduce studies in which empirical data have been utilised to give voice to a number of participants across different contexts. These studies used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and the main sources of the data consisted of interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, and policy documents.

Jane Fountain (2001) explored the use of customer service ideas in the public sector in the United States. She analysed the government document of the *National Performance Review* and the New Public Management initiatives in general. Fountain argued that despite the extensive, even rhetorical, use of the customer service concept in the public sector, its implications have remained underdeveloped, and employees lack an understanding of its meaning and implications. The theoretical-methodological framework for the examination was metaphors shaping attitudes, cognition, and behaviour. The principle of the approach was that terminology, such as replacing the term citizen with customer, constitutes a tool for thought and action and that metaphors and language affect cognition and action. Fountain argued that it is of central importance to follow how customer focus and customer discourse materialise or have materialised in practice. The empirical data of her examination consists of a policy document, and thus does not provide practice-based evidence to lean on.

Fountain (2001) introduced a series of operational and political paradoxes related to the implementation of private sector customer service frameworks in the public sector. The most serious one, according to her, concerned political equality. In business, customers' socioeconomic status and level of vocal behaviour can affect the service level of enterprises. Fountain considered that such a course of actions initiating inequality among customers was not acceptable and transferable to public sector services (also Aberbach & Christensen, 2005).

The second paradox concerned an unclear or even problematic understanding of who the customer of the public sector is. Similar concerns were voiced in the studies of Alford (2002) and Aberbach and Christensen (2005). The analysed report indicated that (business) customers are direct recipients of services, whereas public agencies serve the public. Fountain argued that the New Public Management initiatives maybe purposeful at the operational level in public organisations, but they do not contribute to the equality of citizens at the political level. Thus, according to her the main challenge in the New Public Management frame is to parallel the objectives of increasing efficiency and responsiveness with the objective of strengthening democracy (Fountain, 2001).

Practical problems that arise, Fountain (ibid.) argued, are agencies serving customers with conflicting interests, fragmenting service production in several policy domains, and the impossibility to conceptualise, for instance, taxpayers or voters as customers representing a coherent group. Further, Fountain reminded us that the main purpose of enterprises is to satisfy their stakeholders, not customers. Hence, customer orientation as a part of company strategies is also a tool to meet the main objective of making a profit. Aberbach and Christensen (2005) made the same conclusion in their study and expressed their concern about its implications regarding equality of the services provided. Considering the different philosophies behind the private and the public sector, Fountain argued that the New Public Management introduces only fragments of the private sector and applies them to the public sector (see du Gay, 1996 and Aberbach & Christensen, 2005).

The third paradox was the difficulty of measuring intangible services. Fountain argued that large surveys provide rather biased and useless information on services and their development and that such mass processing of customers often leads to methods of stereotyping and categorising in work activities, which translates into poorer service (see

Rosenthal & Peccei, 2006). The fourth paradox originated from the rational choice theory behind the New Public Management principles: citizens' or customers' right to and preference for their own choice. The assumption was that individuals have clear and stable needs that the authorities fulfil in a complex, multidimensional, and historically changing institutional context. Individuality leads to the fifth identified paradox, which was the understanding of customers as individuals who know their preferences, and the disregard for civil servants' and citizens' democratic responsibilities. Concerns regarding the implications of customer choice, such as rights, responsiveness, responsabilisation, and automatisisation were also expressed by Aberbach & Christensen (2005) Vigoda (2002) and du Gay (1996) in their theoretical studies.

Fountain (2001) concluded that customer service strategies are more developed in the private sector than in the public sector. She claimed not to argue against efficiency and responsiveness in public organisations, but she was concerned about the deployed business models. According to her, implemented simplified fragments of business concepts and models may be accepted as exciting and useful, but can be harmful when reorganising the relationship between state and citizens (also Aberbach & Christensen, 2005).

Newman and Vidler (2006) had substantial empirical data in the form of interviews and policy documents in their investigation of public sector customers. They approached the public sector customer concept in relation to consumerism; more precisely, in relation to the shift towards a more consumerist conception in the context of modernisation of health care in the United Kingdom. The theoretical resources utilised were taken from the discipline of sociology, theories of consumerism, modernity, and post-modernism. The objective of the study was to explore how consumers and customers were constructed in interviews and how policy documents presented the image of consumers and customers to justify reforms in the public sector.

Newman and Vidler interviewed senior health care managers in the areas of primary health care, policing, and social care and analysed related policy documents. They used the methodology of policy as discourse and searched for clues of tensions to be negotiated in constructing narratives in the documents. The authors understood consumer discourse to constitute new forms of relationships between parties and activities in the field. The key concepts of the study were customers' choice, responsibility, and empowerment, which were also utilised in the studies of Fountain (2001), Aberbach and Christensen (2005), Vigoda (2001), and du Gay (1996).

In the policy documents Newman and Vidler (2006) identified tensions between the conception of equality and personalised choice-oriented services, and expressed their concern over the growth of inequality in service provision. The authors argued that political discourse constructed the development of new relationships between agents (customers and service providers) to fit the new, modern society introduced in policy documents. Newman and Vidler also identified an important sub-strategy in the documents: a fundamental shift from collective needs toward individual demands and choice, which was presented in the documents in a simplistic way. A development as the authors argued, is likely to undermine the ethical consequences of the shift.

According to Newman and Vidler, the interviews revealed the lack of materialisation of governmental discourse as well as local interpretation of policies by service providers. Also, the interviews revealed tensions between needs and wants, on the one hand, and choice and equity on the other, which resulted in conflicts between customers and clinicians on a regular basis. The authors argued that the ideology behind consumerism, apparently

supported by policy documents, aimed to individuate the tensions between needs or demands and resources. However, Newman and Vidler argued that the problems and tensions a grass root practitioner or a specific authority experienced in daily work practices were not produced by individuals in organisational settings; they were in the modernisation programme itself. They emphasised that modernising the conception of health was based on a simplistic simple version of historical models of services and on the needs of individual customers, and that it aimed at changing the relationship between health services and service-users (Newman & Vidler, 2006).

Further, Newman and Vidler (*ibid.*) reported on the transfer of authoritative power from health practitioners to empowered and responsible partner customers. They questioned, however, whether customers actually received what they expected to receive, and whether they expected business style services from public health care providers after all. The authors also identified a shift in customers' position; for the first time the on-going challenge of balancing professional power and autonomy in defining needs and customers' choice was embodied in customers.

Newman and Vidler's (2006) study provided a variety of conceptions regarding customers or service-users. For instance, in the analysed documents customers were empowered and responsible individuals interested in seeking and choosing tailor-made and responsive services. Also, the authors identified conceptions of discriminating consumers, expert patients, responsible health users, demanding consumers, articulate customers, and deprived customers. The last conception emphasised communities rather than individual actions. Their conclusion was that consumerism, including customer approach, should not be viewed as a coherent logic that needs to be supported or resisted. Rather it should be studied taking into account the new discourses and new set of organisational procedures it provides.

As part of the same research project as Newman and Vidler's (2006), Clarke and Newman (2007) examined the new consumerism in public health services in the United Kingdom. Their study was unique among those reviewed because of the character of the interview data which was collected among customers and service-users. Clarke and Newman argued that that one critical controversy in the public sector reform is the distinction it makes between citizens and consumers, which are related to larger binaries, such as social democracy/neoliberalism, state/market, active/passive agents, public/private, old collective/new individual, and de-commodification/commodification. Their objective in the study was to move beyond these binaries in order to understand the ongoing discourse and debate in public sector reforms, and the consumerist orientation related to it. The theoretical framework of the study leant on neoliberalism, democracy, and public management and on concepts of transformism, passive revolution, choice, and relationships between public services and service-users.

Clarke and Newman analysed the New Labour policy documents in which consumerism was introduced as a solution to old bureaucratic public services. They also conducted a questionnaire, interviews, and focus group discussions among public sector health care customers. One of the main findings was that the introduction of political binaries of the old collective citizenship and the new individual consumerism did not materialise in practice among service-users. For instance, 'old patients' were not entirely conceptualised as passive service receivers with a closed relationship with health professionals. Also, 'old patients' did not accept old dysfunctional procedures in a way the political discourse claimed. Instead, the authors identified in 'old patient' discourse elements of stakeholder, partnership, and teams which are open to a larger number of participants. In addition, an 'old patient's'

identification as a patient, for example, was linked to the desire for better services, unlike the New Labour discourse would lead one to believe (Clarke & Newman, 2007, p. 754).

The researchers also reported that the terms of consumerist and customer used in policy discourse were not widely used among service-users; they did not identify themselves as consumers as understood in political discourse, but rather as patients or service-users using public services. Similarly, the interviews revealed limited identification with the term citizen (see also Newman & Vidler, 2006 and Richter & Cornford, 2007). Thus, the authors argued, people assumed different identifications, such as citizens, consumers, parents, patients, and pupils, depending on the context and character of the service transaction. Patients, for instance, were conceived as dependent in relation to health professionals, but also as knowledgeable persons having power over their own situation. Relationships were occasionally understood as personalised relationships between patients and medical practitioners, sometimes as active commitments between other parties (Clarke & Newman, 2007).

The findings of Clarke and Newman (2007) suggested that identifications of customers or service-users are comprised of different meanings instead of being stable conceptualisations. They argued that new terms, such as customer, are key terms which refer rather to 'imagined or desired forms of belonging to institutions and practices', and are subject to different interpretations being a subject of different interpretations (also du Gay 1996 and Newman & Vidler, 2006). They argued that categorisation of people's relationships with public services, such as citizen/consumer or active/passive, diminishes the multiplicity and mobility which actually can help understand these complex relationships.

Catherine E. Needham (2006) carried out a study on public sector customers in the areas of health care and education and skills in England. Her main interest was to examine ethical dimensions in public services, the significance of customer discourse in relation to ethos, and the implications of a customer care focus in service delivery. From the perspective of citizens and citizenship the objective of her study had an important aim in the discussion on public sector customers. The data were collected by interviewing civil servants and officers and by analysing organisational documents and ministerial speeches related to public sector reforms. In the interviews the participants were asked about their understanding and opinion of treating local people as customers.

Needham (2006) reported that in the analysed documents the term customer was the most or the second most frequently used term in seven local government councils of eight. The interview analysis provided five categories of customer care: personalising services around the user, giving users a choice of services, users paying for services, treating users with courtesy and respect, and improving user access to services. Interestingly, the analysis revealed that the five conceptions of customer care were inconsistent with the discourse of customer care introduced by the authorities. Thus, while customer orientation and discourse of customer were endorsed and utilised by politicians and bureaucrats, they lacked clarity and coherence in practice. The move toward customer oriented services and understanding of customers had not developed as the policy makers had expected. It is notable that the interviewees were concerned about the customer approach in the public sector and the position of citizenship in relation to customer discourse (see Richter & Cornford, 2007). Needham argued that the customer approach might be of risk for the government, since it could restrict the role of citizen, support public services to satisfy individual wants, and ignore collective goals.

Needham (2006) suggested two official rationales behind the customer discourse. The first is that it helps create a certain mind-set or culture emphasising organisations' internal restructuring. The second is the aim to meet public expectations and customers' opportunities for choice and personalisation of services. Her data, however, showed that public service providers are likely to meet problems in responding to users' expectations of choice if customers, for instance, do not accept limits on financial or other resources in public sector services.

Richter and Cornford (2007) had a slightly different and novel topic of research compared with other reviewed studies on public sector customers. They explored the significance of implementing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology in a Customer Service Department of a local authority in the United Kingdom. The researchers expressed their concerns over the balance or imbalance between individuality and collective citizenship in the frame of the New Public Management and the use of CRM. They explained that one of the objectives of the CRM technology was to analytically segment and classify customers in order to model their future behaviour. Richter and Cornford argued that deployment of CRM technologies has an individuating impact on the service-user conception, since CRM aims to value and respond to the needs of individual customers. Thus, a customer of CRM is 'a rational, self-knowing, self-interested individual who is demanding of attention and seeking to economise both their money and, particularly important in the public service context, their time and effort' (ibid. p. 214). Accordingly, CRM seems to ignore the social aspects of customers and citizens. Also, the authors expressed their concern over how CRM tools can be used to focus on the most profitable customers, thus leading to social sorting and disadvantaging the most vulnerable customers.

In order to contribute empirically to their concerns above, Richter and Cornford (2007) interviewed council managers, council workers, and technology providers, and observed customer service work in a Customer Service Department. They utilised Le Grand's nomenclature: knight, knave, pawn, and queen in analysing tension between the concepts of customer and citizen. The findings suggested that the elements of choice identified were designed to meet knavish (self-interest) customers' needs rather than to support collective citizenship. Further, they identified increasingly demanding and rationally calculating customers.

The authors' main finding was an unquestioning acceptance of conceptualising service-users as customers. If the term citizen was brought up, it was rejected; no one used the term on their own initiative. The term customer had a strong position within the service provision. Interestingly, their findings varied from Needham's (2006) findings in regard to the participants' opinions or understanding of customers and citizens. In Needham's study the interviewees raised concerns about the customer approach and the position of citizens, whereas Richter and Conford expressed their own concerns about the unquestioning acceptance of the customer approach and avoidance of the notion of citizenship (see also Newman & Vidler, 2006 and Clarke & Newman, 2007). Richter and Conford argued that if service-users are treated like customers they are encouraged to act like customers, and this can result in a knavish society. They suggest that alternative technologies and other material interventions ought to be developed to promote more publicly oriented 'Knighly systems', such as Citizen Relationship Management. Richter and Conford's study was empirically grounded and provided an interesting and important approach to the use of technologies in the context of modernisation of the public sector.

Rosenthal and Peccei (2006) studied conceptualisation and categorisation of customers among service front-line workers in the United Kingdom. The study was carried out in the

context of a reorganisation of the welfare administration in employment and social services. The authors argued that the ongoing public sector reforms (spiced with a discursive reframing of service users as customers who call for flexible public services for individual customers with rights and responsibilities) offered an interesting and important opportunity to study category-based judgements of customers. They further argued that a complex and ambiguous work environment and demanding service interactions tend to encourage front-line workers to create a variety of methods to manage their work tasks and interaction with customers. Expected problems, tensions, and conflicting situations may be managed, for example, by using various typologies and categories of customers.

Rosenthal and Peccei (2006) further developed the theory of categorisation and labelling by moving from a psychological perspective toward a more sociological one in which the social context, such as interaction with customers and the impact of the administration, was taken into account when analysing individual perceptions. They described the approach as an integrated analysis relating categorisation and labelling to conflict analysis in customer-worker interaction and the organisational context.

Rosenthal and Peccei (2006) used the semi-structured interview to delineate the front-line staff's understanding of their customers by examining customer types and categories. They asked explicit questions concerning customer types (good and bad), and the categorisation process (how they can tell what kind of customers they are going to meet). The analysis of types of customers provided two types of classification: formal ones linked to the benefit categories (provided by the authorities) and social ones providing useful information missing in the formal classification. The formal classification included: New Deal people, 18-20s, lone parents, disabled people, and the potentially violent. Examples of the social classification are youngsters, lazy gits (those not willing to work), passive people, first timers, long-term unemployed, grateful people, and addicts. Categorisation was used to group different customer types, which reflected organisational classifications or social characteristics.

In addition to categorising customer types, they extended the analysis to reveal a particular meaning and significance of the identified categories by comparing ideal (good) and not ideal (bad) customers, taking into account the perceived body language of the customers. Their findings revealed that the main criteria helping to create good/bad categorisations were job readiness, interaction style (pleasant, unpleasant), perceived gratitude for services, and capacity for aggression.

The third phase of Rosenthal and Peccei's (2006) analysis focused on expected stress, problems, or conflicts in work and interaction encounters and the methods used to deal with these problems. Their framework comprised six dimensions related to the expected problems: facilitation of work, gain in regard to performance management (disabled people, for instance, are worth the highest points), control (workers seek to have control over interaction), danger (aggressive customers), moral acceptability (morally offensive customers), and self-identity (sense of openness during encounters).

Rosenthal and Peccei's (2006) study showed that organisational resources and procedures, and the design of job roles encourage workers to categorise their customers. An ideal client, for example, was one facilitating rather than complicating the work and thus affecting work efficiency. They emphasised that the problem arising out of such categorising is likely to affect the outcome, as well as service encounters in the future. Their study also revealed that problems and conflicts experienced in service encounters were to

some extent structured by authorities through formal labelling of customers and the design of job roles and organisational procedures.

Paarlberg (2007) carried out a combination of a qualitative interview and a quantitative survey study among civilian employees at a government unit in order to examine customer orientation and its relationship to employee motivation and performance. The studied organisation was the United States Department of Defense, and the employees from a number of work roles represented the research, development, testing, and evaluation centre. The centre provided engineering and scientific expertise for the development, repair, and testing of military systems. Paarlberg was motivated to investigate the topic because of the large scale shift in public organisations toward customer and market oriented organisations. He explained that customer orientation was a controversial topic in public administration theory and practice, and that customer orientation manifested itself also in a negative way in the public sector employees' work. The theoretical-methodological framework for the investigation was based on various sources including theories from psychology and public administration.

In Paarlberg's (2007) study public sector customers were understood as persons with needs to which service providers respond. Also, public sector customers were active participants in the transformative service delivery process. By transformative process he meant a process in which service recipients seek to become, for instance, better educated, but need to be active in regard to their expectations (compare Vigoda, 2002). Customer orientation was operationalised as awareness of customers' needs, resources in customer interaction, and responsiveness to customers' needs.

Paarlberg (2007) reported on hints of 'goal conflicts', which were conflicting orientations across organisational levels regarding the uncertainty of institutional and individual customers. Managers and employees had a different understanding of who the customer was. Line employees tended to understand individual customers or particular military units as their customer, whereas the modernisation of public organisations guided leaders to focus on the actual purchaser, such as the Department of Defense or private contractors. The organisation's formal object of customer orientation was institutional customers. Another finding was that customers were occasionally brought up as a distant 'some guy' and sometimes very real 'war fighter'.

According to Paarlberg (2007) customer orientation has strong positive implications for performance and motivation. He, however, recognised that customer orientation may also have limited and negative implications for employee performance. For example, because of the character of government organisations, they may have a number of multiple customers across various hierarchical levels, creating competing demands and having a negative effect on attitudes and behaviour. Paarlberg explained that he does not represent a critique of modernisation and corporatisation of the public sector; instead, he emphasises the positive impact of customer orientation, which has the possibility of bridging formal management and employee outcomes.

Korunka et al (2007) analysed changes in customer orientation initiated by implementation of the New Public Management in tax authority organisations in Austria and the United States. They conducted two longitudinal quantitative surveys for employees in order to develop an instrument to measure customer orientation, which they argued to be a prerequisite for customer satisfaction. They conceptualised customer orientation from three perspectives: job characteristics (feedback, autonomy), organisational characteristics (team quality, participation, support from superiors), and quality of working life (job satisfaction, stress). In addition, they asked for opinions on perceived customer orientation.

The conceptual framework of Korunka et al. (2007) was based on the understanding that an introduction of the Total Quality Management and the New Public Management principles affect job characteristics, organisational characteristics, and quality of working life. These aspects, in turn, have an influence on the perceived customer orientation of employees, which affects customer satisfaction. In their study, conceptualising of customers as such was not provided, but the starting point for an understanding of customers was a reciprocal relation with a perceived customer orientation. Korunka et al. reported on the findings, such as 'significant but small increase in perceived customer orientation' during the implementation of the New Public Management (quality management) (Korunka et al., 2007, p. 314).

Another entirely quantitative study on customer orientation was carried out by Rod & Ashill (2010). Their research case was a new state-owned enterprise (a former public organisation) in New Zealand, which had implemented the New Public Management model. The objective was to examine customer orientation, not to conceptualise customers as such. The study used a questionnaire to delineate customer orientation as a personality trait among frontline employees. Because of the character of the organisation, Rod and Ashill stated that the questionnaire was adapted from a traditional business context for application to hybrids of former governmental organisation and new business oriented organisation.

Rod and Ashill (2010) defined customer orientation 'as a surface-level personality trait within a hierarchical personality structure which views behaviour as a function of both the person, i.e. personality, and the environment, i.e. nature of the job' (ibid., p. 602). The theoretical framework was Bagozzi's reformulation of attitude theory, which links appraisal, emotional response, and behaviour. The customer orientation was operationalised in the questionnaire to include job satisfaction, service recovery performance, turnover intention, organisational commitment, and their relationships. Rod and Ashill's findings indicated that customer orientation has a significant beneficial effect on job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation in the New Public Management context. Thus, since they have an influence on service performance and the organisation's turnover, customer orientation personality traits ought to be utilised when recruiting new employees (Rod & Ashill, 2010, p. 614).

2.3. Positioning the study within the literature on public sector customers

Reflecting on the review above, I position this study in the field of discussion by 1) focusing on conceptualisation of customers, 2) adopting the perspective of employees, 3) contextualising the studied organisations locally and historically, and 4) focusing on the dynamic and contradictory character of conceptualisation. In the following, I elaborate on these four approaches.

First, a number studies approached the topic by examining the impact or role of customer orientation (Paarlberg, 2007; Rod & Ashill, 2010), measuring customer orientation (Korunka et al., 2006), examining how customer orientation and customer approach impact on public sector activities and citizenship (Fountain, 2001; Aberbach & Christensen, 2005; Needham, 2006; Vigoda, 2001), or how ICT tools used for better customer orientation reshape the roles of citizens and customers (Richter & Cornford, 2007). Previous studies have indicated that customer orientation or customer focus increase organisations' productivity to a certain extent, thus it is a relevant topic to examine (Alford, 2001; Clarke

& Newman, 2007; Newman & Vidler, 2006; Rosenthal & Peccei, 2006). In order to grasp the multidimensional character of public sector customers, however, it is essential to conceptualise customers theoretically and focus on the concept itself: How are customers understood as an object of work and how has the concept of customer evolved and changed? My study enriches and further develops the conceptualisation provided and initiated in the studies presented in this chapter.

Second, a number of studies put primacy on elaborating what customer approach meant from the perspective of citizens (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005; Vigoda, 2002; Alford, 2002; Fountain, 2001; Newman & Vidler, 2006; Clarke and Newman, 2007; Needham, 2006; Richter & Cornford, 2007), while others investigated customers' self-conceptualisation (Clarke and Newman 2007). These studies significantly contributed to an elaboration of the impacts on and changing conceptualisation of citizenship, both extremely important topics. The salience of customers' self-conceptualisation cannot be denied either. Yet, it is also relevant to deepen both a theoretically and empirically grounded understanding of 'who a public sector customer is' from the perspective of employees and other participants in the service provision. It is also important to explore the challenges and problems experienced in service encounters initiated by the new customer approach.

Practice-based findings from the perspective of employees are an important source of knowledge creation that administrators, employees, and customers are expected to use to better understand changing work practices and challenges at work. Thus, this study focuses on an approach that examines customers from the perspective of employees or other participants in service production (e.g. elected officials), their understanding of customers, and their descriptions of implications of a customer approach in work settings. The interview data consists of persons who work in the public, private, or third sector providing services for public sector customers, or are otherwise related to service provision; for instance, elected officials and representatives of a ministry. This analysis does not separate hierarchical or vertical division of labour, but consider all the interviewees in one way or other as participants in the service provision (I call them here employees, since the majority of the interviewees are 'actual' employees in the studied organisations). Third, this study explores the concept of customer in the public sector by contextualising the concept in locally and historically specifiable organisations. In order to understand theoretically the object under investigation, it is necessary to go beyond the 'here and now' and to recognise the locality, temporality, and historical development of the concept. Understanding history is a means to identify possible culturally evolved problems encountered in practices. It is also a key to solving these problems and challenges. The primarily theoretical studies reviewed (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005; Vigoda, 2002; Alford, 2002; du Gay, 1996) lacked such local contextualisation. They were rigorous and the topic of public sector customer was investigated in various ways, but by introducing customers in abstract fields of practices they did not give voice to actors in a specific context. Further, they took history and the temporal dimension seriously into consideration by recognising the development of a customer approach, for instance, from a collective citizenship toward individual customers, as initiated by the introduction of the New Public Management. Yet the development of the concept was examined at an abstract level.

Newman and Vidler (2006), Clarke and Newman (2007), and Needham (2006) carried out primarily empirical studies in particular fields of services, thus contextualising the data in specific local practices. Also, they used policy documents in order to analyse the customer approach from a historical perspective. Clarke and Newman (2007) analysed policy documents in order to examine 'new and old' customers. However, neither they nor

Newman and Vidler (2006) carried out a systematic document analysis to delineate the development of the concept. The documents seemed to be chosen individually for the analysis to support or supplement other collected data. In terms of a systematic document analysis, Needham's (2006) investigation was more thorough. She analysed the *Best Value Performance Plans* of 2003 and 2004 from eight different areas of services and conducted interviews in the same areas. Yet, Needham's study, similar to Clarke and Newman's (2007) and Newman and Vidler's (2006), remained limited regarding the historical time scale of the analysis. My contribution to filling this gap is to provide analyses of systematically collected practice-based ethnographic data from four different fields of work in the form of interviews and historical documents over a time span of three decades. This kind of design was not fully utilised in any of the reviewed studies.

Fourth, the study at hand focuses on the contradictory and at the same time dynamic character of the concept of customer. Some of the reviewed studies introduced traces of contradiction when identifying tensions between participants in service encounters. The main societal concern in some of the studies was the tension between collective citizenship and individual customers and how it could be balanced in order to provide equal public services to citizens (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005; Vigoda, 2002; Fountain, 2001). The authors reported on a number of empirically grounded tensions and conflicts in work practices. These were: inconsistency between customers' and authorities' conception of customer care (Needham, 2006); public service providers' problems in responding to users' expectations of choice (Clarke & Newman, 2007); conflicts between customers and clinicians because of tensions between choice, equity, needs, and wants (Newman & Vidler, 2006); and goal conflict in the understanding of who the organisation's customers are (Paarlberg, 2007).

Several of the reviewed studies thus recognised the importance of specifying customer approach by focusing on the ruptures, conflicts, and tension with theoretically or empirically grounded arguments. Yet, they did not theoretically explain the source of evolving tensions or conflicts. Newman and Vidler (2006), however, raised an important issue by arguing that when grass root practitioners experience problems in day-to-day routines in new working contexts the core of the tensions is not necessarily produced 'inside the organisation'. They argued that the identified tensions were produced by the modernisation programme and its introduction to the public sector rather than by practices in work places. My contribution to this discussion is to explore the concept of public sector customer, and examine the inner contradictions of the concept in order to explain its development and logic. Thus, my intention is to enhance an understanding of the challenges identified and the problems experienced in service encounters in the studied organisations.

Further, since the contexts and fields of work in which concepts are used are not stable entities, concepts also need to be understood as dynamic rather than stable. Following this principle in this study, I recognise the dynamic and constantly changing character of concepts and conceptualisation processes. Traces of the dynamic character of customer approach were identified by number of reviewed studies. Newman and Vidler (2006) emphasised that consumerism should not be viewed as a coherent and stable logic that needs to be supported or resisted. Clarke and Newman (2007) concluded that people hold multiple identifications, such as citizens, consumers, parents, patients, and pupils, depending on the context and character of service transaction. Needham (2006) revealed that the analysed conceptions of customer care were inconsistent with authorities' discourse of customer care. Du Gay (1996) suggested conceptualising the relationship between customers and

employees as unstable and dynamic, and as having a complementing instead of opposing relationship. My objective is to promote an understanding of the dynamic character of the concept of public sector customer by analysing the concept contextually and historically and by identifying inner contradiction as a source of its development.

2.4. Research questions

This research focuses on the development and conveyance of the concept of customer, which the New Public Management approach introduced to the public sector. Customer discourse cannot be disregarded in contemporary public sector language. Former patients, school children and their parents, relatives, service users, and citizens are increasingly becoming or have become customers of public organisations. In the social work context, for instance, the concept of customer was introduced in the 1980s and became more established in the 1990s. The societal discourse imprinted the concept in the Social Protection Law (1982/710) in the 1990s and 2000s. Customer replaced the concepts of inhabitant, person, family, and individual (Poikela, 2010, p 6).

The concept, however, is multidimensional and may have different meanings from the perspective of organisations as well as customers. In the national newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*, a service-user, a customer, or a mother (or whatever one might want to call a woman giving birth to a child) was interviewed in the local hospital in the City of Porvoo after giving birth to her fourth son. She explained that in the hospital she was ‘regarded as a human being, not a customer’ (Siukonen & Vihavainen, 2012). In 2014 and 2015 a Finnish private bank deployed a campaign on television and in the newspapers in which they advertise ‘seeing in every customer a human being’.

It seems that the idea of strengthening the customer focus and seeing service users as customers does not have entirely positive connotations and implications in practice. The customer approach can initiate tensions in everyday work practices. Also, organisational operations may not be organised to support employees to integrate historically developed customer thinking in their work.

The objective of this research is to study the concept of customer as a historically developed object of work. To explore the topic I have formulated four research questions:

1. How has the concept of customer historically developed in four public sector organisations?

My main method of identifying the customer concept is to explore how it has been introduced in the historical documents of four public sector organisations over a time span of three decades (Chapter six). I analyse how the concept has evolved and become identifiable in the documents along with the introduction of the New Public Management approach. By becoming more identifiable I mean the extent to which the word customer appears in the documents and/or if it is frequently examined historically. Also, I focus on how its introduction reflects the findings in the interview data. The documents represent the intention of customer focus in the studied organisations. The interviews, for their part, represent the interpretations of the word customer from the perspective of employees (research questions two, three, and four).

2. How is the concept of customer conveyed in the discourse of the public sector organisation employees?

The second research question explores how the concept of customer is realised in employees' discourse. Tensions and conflicting discourses are analysed in order to reveal the dynamics and motion of the concept. Tensions and conflicting discourses are here understood as implications of developmental contradictions. The findings are discussed in Chapter seven.

3. How are customers understood as evaluators of services conveyed in the discourse of public sector organisation employees?

The New Public Management approach has shifted the focus of public sector service provision from putting primacy on processes toward end-products and results (Edwards & Daniels, 2012; Hebson, Grimshaw, & Marchington, 2003; Hood, 1991). Thus, customers are introduced as active and participatory evaluators of services in the New Public Management discourse. The third research question explores how conceptions of such evaluators of services are expressed in the discourse of employees. The findings are discussed in Chapter eight.

4. What possibilities of expansion of the concept of customer can be detected in the discourse of the public sector organisation employees?

The fourth research question concerns the possibilities of expansion of the concept of customer. It focuses on social and temporal dimensions of expansion and explores the multifaceted character of the concept of customer. In the New Public Management approach customers are introduced as active, participatory, influential, and rational individuals with free choice (Clarke & Newman, 2007; Fountain, 2001; Koskiahio, 2008). Some studies have identified the increasing importance of networks in public sector service provision (Seppänen, Cerf, & Toiviainen, 2013). Such expansions open up possibilities and demands for reconceptualising the customer, and thus have implications in work practices. The findings are given in Chapter nine.

PART II: THEORETICAL RESOURCES, RESEARCH CONTEXT, AND DATA ANALYSIS

In the first part of the study (Part I) I provided the societal background of my research and an introduction to the reorganisation of public organisations following the New Public Management approach. I also briefly reviewed the concept of customer in the private and the public sectors and in new organisational settings in public organisations (Chapter one). In the second chapter I introduced previous studies on the public sector customer and presented the research questions.

In the second part (Part II) I first introduce the theoretical framework and the key concepts which have been meaningful for my study. I then present the contribution of cultural-historical activity theory in the study of concepts and conceptualisation. In Chapter four my intention is to add more insight to the context of my research insight to the context of my research. I introduce the research sites and the research projects in which the data is collected, and I finalise the chapter with a historical review of the four fields of work under study. The last section (Chapter five) of part II comprises the method of discursive analysis, descriptions of data and data collection and an introduction to the intermediate conceptual dimensions and analytical tools created for the analysis.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I propose cultural-historical activity theory (Engeström, 1987; Il'enkov, 1977; Leont'ev, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978) as a theoretical framework with which to study expansion possibilities of the concept of customer in organisational settings. Engeström, Pasanen, Toiviainen, and Haavisto (2005, pp. 48-50) argued that, for instance, standard cognitive theories focus on stable and well-defined concepts and that concept formation has been understood as a top-down process. Concepts have thus been studied in laboratories or in classrooms at school rather than in real life settings. Here, the objective is to examine the multiple dimensions and expansive potential of the concept of customer in use among employees in the public sector (Engeström & Sannino, 2012). I consider cultural-historical activity theory as providing an adequate framework for such elaboration related to human activity and meaning making.

Employing cultural-historical activity theory means to be ontologically committed to dialectics and materialism. Dialectics is 'a philosophy, a logic, a way of seeing the world' that opposes what Hegel and Marxists called metaphysical worldview. Metaphysics or a mechanist and metaphysical worldview regards things as static, unchanging, self-contained, and not related to other things. They are abstracted from the context (Sayers, 1980, p. 2; Il'enkov, 1977).

Dialectics is a logic of concepts, and deals with concrete or theoretical concepts which are real, in constant motion and change. They hold in themselves a unity of diverse aspects and are analysed by reconstructing a systemic whole from the relationships in the initial, abstract concept. Also, theoretical concepts are socially developed and mediated cultural-historical products (Il'enkov, 1977). Sayers (1980, p. 4) gives an example of dialectics of societies:

(...) all concrete societies are in a process of development and change; that they are essentially *historical* in character; that particular forms of society are not eternal but come into being, develop and eventually perish and give way to other forms. And yet, in the non-Marxist social sciences, it is standard to treat societies, or institutions of society, abstractly and unhistorically. It is standard to consider them statically and not dynamically; merely as they are, and not in their necessary process of becoming, development and decay.

The idea of contradictions in things is the main principle of dialectics. Theoretical concepts are inherently contradictory, meaning that there are essential and necessary conflicts, tension, or opposing forces in things. Thus, contradictions are not external and accidental (Il'enkov, 1977; Sayers, 1980).

Metaphysics and dialectics are traditional brands of philosophy used for centuries to explain and understand the nature of being and the world. Metaphysics, representing traditional logic, has been related to the natural sciences and the studies of biology, mathematics, and physics. Sayers (1980), however, argues that following dialectical logic, mechanical processes can also be understood concretely instead of abstractly. For instance, machines have been invented and produced 'at a certain time and place' and 'they operate, gradually wear out, decay and cease to be'. Also, the 'solar system was formed at a particular

stage in the evolution of the universe, has gone through a process of change and development, and is destined eventually to perish' (Sayers, 1980, pp. 4-5).

It is worth noting here that materialism does not refer to 'crude materialism', a merely subjective and reductionist approach, which explains consciousness by neurological and physical brain activity. Instead, consciousness, mental functions, and meanings have socio-historical origins (culture, social activity), from outside of the 'thinking body', 'representation of things in the body of other things', and created by human beings (Il'enkov, 1977; Leont'ev, 1978; Levant, 2014, p. 5-8). Alex Levant clarifies the idea in the excerpt below:

The reflection of things in other things is not a mental projection onto the material world; rather, it exists objectively in the same physical space as the matter it reflects, namely in the actual activity of human beings. Consequently, the ideal representation of a material object always involves the activity into which the object is incorporated (Levant, 2014 p. 8).

In the following, I first briefly introduce the historical roots of cultural historical activity theory. Second, I continue by introducing the key concepts that are utilised in the study. Third, I introduce the idea of dialectical theoretical concepts and how they are understood in my study.

3.1. Cultural historical activity theory

The main philosophical roots of the cultural-historical activity theory can be found in the works of four famous thinkers: Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), and Karl Marx (1818-1883). Their main contribution to the philosophy influencing cultural-historical activity theory has been materialistic ontology, the dialectic between the ideal and the material as the opposite of Cartesian dualism, and contradictions as a source of development (Il'enkov, 1977).

Spinoza was among the first philosophers who criticised the Cartesian way of separating thought and body. Thus, he was ahead of his time when philosophically uniting the materialistic principles of thought and their relation to the external world. For him thought and body were two sides of the same matter, one object. Kant, instead, raised questions concerning the relationship between subject and object and empirical and theoretical generalisations. He also considered contradictions essential in logical thinking instead of problems that needs to be solved. Hegel's understanding of human consciousness was based on idealism, but his contribution to cultural-historical activity theory was the introduction of the notion of 'material, productive activity' and 'instruments of labour' in knowledge creation. He continued Kant's dialectical conceptualisation of contradictions and recognised 'a particular and universal in a unity' as a source of development and systematic understanding of interdependent relations of phenomena (Engeström, 1987, p. 37; Glassman, 2000, p. 5; Il'enkov, 1977, Essay 3; Sayers, 1980, pp. 28-29).

Marx (1867) followed Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel, and further developed an understanding of human activity. Marx's idea of human beings conceptualised them as active transformers of nature. Humans are not entirely products of their history and culture, but they also actively transform nature through their activity. Instead of adapting to the environment, they can change it and at the same time change themselves and their own activity. Marx's masterpiece was his analysis of commodity in a capitalist society and his argument that there

is a fundamental contradiction between the use-value and exchange-value of products (Il'enkov, 1977). Marx (1867) also introduced the principle of ascending from the abstract to the concrete in which both abstract and concrete are theoretical concepts. Abstract refers to a simplistic, underdeveloped, and partial entity isolated from the concrete whole. Ascending from the abstract to the concrete is a dialectical process moving from an empirical toward a theoretical conceptualisation by, first, identifying the essence of an object, the germ-cell, and second, enriching the initial abstraction into a concrete and complex whole of interconnected systems.

In the 20th century several Soviet psychologists and philosophers, including Lev Semjonovits Vygotsky (1978; 1987), Aleksei Nikolajevits Leont'ev (1978), Edvald Vasilyevich Il'enkov (1977), Alexander Romanovits Luria (Cole, Levitin & Luria, 2006), and Vasily Vasilovich Davydov (1990), elaborated further on the materialistic ontology, 'materialistic conception of history' (Levant, 2014, p. 4), and the view of historically developed, social, objective, and mediated human consciousness and activity. The academics introduced above do not represent the entire group of researchers contributing to the contemporary cultural-historical activity theory, but they are perhaps the best known in the Western World and certainly have had the major influence on my study.

Yrjö Engeström (1996), one of the leading researchers in the area of cultural-historical activity theory has described a three-phase development of the theory. The first phase was the cultural-historical psychology of Vygotsky (1978) and his theorisation of mediated actions and mediating artefacts. Vygotsky understood human consciousness as social and developmental, and he argued that human activity was historically developed and culturally mediated by tools and signs (e.g. language). Vygotsky strongly attacked the stimulus-reaction approach predominant in contemporary psychology.

The second phase activity theory arose from Leont'ev's ideas of three activity levels: activity, actions, and operations. He argued that human activity was always object-related and driven by motives; thus, various activities are differentiated by their motives. Actions are goal oriented 'components' of activities that actualise different activities. Operations are actions that have become routinised in a certain context (Leont'ev, 1978, pp. 6-8). Leont'ev crystallised his ideas in an excellent example of hunting, revealing that human activity can only be understood as a series of actions and that the goals of actions can be different from the object of activity (Leont'ev, 1981, pp. 210-213). Behind the activities are needs, social or biological, initiating the activity, but activity only emerges when the object directs it.

In the third phase, cultural-historical activity theory expanded theorising towards networks of different activities, activity systems, and multiple perspectives of different parties (Engeström, 2001). Engeström (1987) and his colleagues developed the developmental work research approach and a model of an activity system to analyse complex work activities. The triangular-shaped model or unit of analysis presents the subject, object, instruments/tools, rules, community, division of labour, and outcome of the activity. An activity system can be used to analyse one work activity or a network of work activities. Recent studies using the activity system as a unit of analysis include the dissertations of Marco Pereira-Querol (2011) and Anu Kajamaa (2012).

Another perspective for the development of activity theory is the object of the study. While early activity theorists in the Soviet Union largely concentrated on children's play and learning activities in their research, contemporary researchers have, instead, extended the approach to new domains, such as work practices and organisational settings (Engeström, 2001, p. 135).

A third way of analysing the development of the activity theory tradition is to understand it through two strands. First, activity can be understood in ‘the Il’enkovian’ philosophical way as ‘an explanatory category’ for ‘the nature and possibility of mind’ or the subject and object relation. Second, activity can be understood in ‘the Leont’evian’ psychological way as a method to understand the practice and to model organisational change (Bakhurst, 2009, p. 205).

Thus far I have provided a brief introduction to the historical roots of cultural-historical activity theory. Nowadays, cultural-historical activity theory is widespread and cannot necessarily be seen as a coherent theory. Nevertheless, I will summarise the above introduction as follows: human activity is mediated, objective, social, and historical in nature. It is worth clarifying here that the social (cultural) aspect of the theory refers to social relations and the organisation of society, defining tools and functions that humans need in order to act in society. Human actions are mediated by cultural artefacts, tools, and signs. The historical aspect of the theory arises from historically developed tools, signs and artefacts, which do not appear out of nothing as ready-made, but instead have a historical origin, and which ‘construct and operate with objects’ (Cole, Levitin & Luria, 2006, p. 44; Davydov, 1990, p. 258).

I continue by explaining my understanding of the key concepts of cultural historical activity theory, which are essential in my study. I first present the notions of mediation and object, and continue with the notion of contradictions. I then discuss how theoretical concepts and concept formation are understood in the tradition of cultural-historical activity theory.

3.2. Mediation

Mediation is one key concept in cultural-historical activity theory. Vygotsky (1978; 1987) further developed Marx’s (1867) work on the dialectical nature of human-environment interaction with psychology. Marx argued that historical changes in society produce changes in human behaviour and consciousness and that when humans change nature (with a variety of tools) they change themselves. Here the use of tools was recognised, but Vygotsky extended the theorising to the discipline of psychology by including signs in this dialectical process. Language (sign systems) is created and developed ‘in the course of human history’ (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 7). Thus, human beings construct understanding and meanings in mediated activity. In work and organisational settings, for instance, with the help of culturally developed concepts and discursive signs, people give meanings to problems and challenges and try to solve them with the help of such tools. ‘Mediation is materialistic, concrete, and practical’ and does not refer to the transfer of content to human consciousness (Vygotsky, 1978; see also Pirkkalainen, 2003, p. 28). Thus, discursive practices are socially constructed functions that humans need in order to act in society.

Vygotsky also (1978) introduced the notion of mediated action, which differentiated man activity from stimulus-reaction actions typical of animals. According to him, human actions are mediated by cultural artefacts, tools, and signs. Following Marx’s ideas, Vygotsky argued that tools are externally oriented, leading to a change in objects (mastery over nature), and signs are internally oriented, aiming at mastering oneself (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55).

3.3. Object-oriented activity

The notion of object or object of activity is one of the key concepts in cultural-historical activity theory². Here, the concept of object does not refer to a general meaning or term, a book or a chair for instance, but to a historically and socially constructed object directing activity. Leont'ev (1981) introduced the concept of object and the idea of object-oriented activity to explain the development of human consciousness. He provided a model of a three-level hierarchy of activity to which I referred earlier on. Highest on the hierarchy is activity, which is social, motive-driven, and object-oriented. Actions are practical actions conducted by individuals or a group of individuals to fulfil a set of goals. Operations are routinised actions carried out in a certain context. Leont'ev's activity theory was powerful in the sense that it replaced the traditional psychological theories emphasising biologically given internal needs with socially developed needs and external motives. Thus, he was able to overcome the problems of dualism between man and society, ideal and material, and subject and object.

Leont'ev explained that human activity is always object-oriented and such a thing as human activity without an object does not exist. Instead, when an object meets a human need, motivation emerges, and leads to activity. In other words, needs trigger activity, which is directed to an object. An object provides the direction and the motive for activity. Historically developed objects, however, are not given to actors, but constructed by tools and signs by actors who make sense, name, stabilise, represent and enact foci for their actions and activities (Engeström & Blackler, 2005, p. 310; Davydov, 1990, p. 258). An object provides the basis for studying activity and also separates different activities that humans are engaged in (Leont'ev, 1978, p. 62).

Reijo Miettinen argued that objects are complex and contradictory, since they can be simultaneously epistemic and practical, revealing a contradiction between the use value and exchange value, and consist of various material and social entities (Miettinen, 2005). Further, the inherent contradiction makes objects dynamic, constantly changing, future-oriented and something to be expanded (Engeström, 1987; Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

A simple contemporary example of emerging activity is learning to drive a car (Pirkkalainen, 2003, pp. 30-31). When an individual has a need to learn to drive and when the need meets an object (a car or a driving school), activity emerges. The activity is realised by actions, such as participating in driving lessons. As driving experience increases, some of the actions become automated and move to the level of operations (routines), which can become the activity of moving from one place to another. The need to drive a car has a socio-cultural basis.

Studying activity methodologically requires first that we need to identify the object directing the activity. Or, if we wish to examine psychological processes, we begin by studying activity, since inner psychological processes are objectified in activity. Thus, identifying the object leads and guides the analysis. Whatever the objective is, the investigation cannot be isolated from the system of social relations and societal life; human beings and society are not in opposition (Leont'ev, 1978).

The final point in introducing the notion of object is the conception of historicity. An object, in this study a customer, is a culturally, socially, and historically constructed concept which has changed and is in a process of constant change. In order to reconceptualise the

² For the notion of object and its character as a 'complex and contradictory' concept, see e.g. Miettinen (2005).

development of a concept, it is essential to reconstruct the history of a concept and reveal the contradictions initiating the change. Thus, in addition to, for instance, a discursive analysis, the object under investigation needs to be examined in its historical context. But examining merely history and the actual state of activity is not enough; we also need to understand the future development and potentiality it holds (Engeström, 1987; Sayers, 1980, p. 43).

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the notion of object and the object of work in organisational settings. For instance, Engeström et al. (2005, p. 74) studied investment managers' work reporting on new objects, such as customers, products, and services. Nummijoki and Engeström (2010) conducted a study in elderly home care and analysed the object of employees (duties at work) and clients (life), and the contradiction initiated by different objects. Other studies were conducted by Haavisto (2002), Saari (2003), Pirkkalainen (2003), Miettinen and Virkkunen (2005), (Engeström & Blackler (2005), and Kallio (2010), to mention a few.

3.4. Contradictions as a source of development

In dialectics the principal concept is a contradiction, a dialectical contradiction. It has a specific meaning that differs from the notion of contradiction in formal logic. Following metaphysics and formal logic, things are static, individual, and externally and accidentally related. Contradictions are in principle impossible to solve and something to avoid or get rid of rather than trying to understand them as something essential. In dialectics, things or concrete concepts are constantly in the process of movement and change and inherently contradictory. Dialectical contradictions are historically evolving opposing elements and a driving force for transformations (Il'enkov, 1977, Essay three; Sayers 1980, pp. 7-8). Also, objects of activity are inherently contradictory, possessing essential conflicts and opposing forces in themselves (Miettinen, 2005).

Marx (1867) analysed class relationships in the capitalist society. He showed that the proletariat and bourgeoisie are in a mutual and essential relationship with each other. Both classes have emerged in the capitalist society and neither could have come into being without the other. Hence, the contradiction between them is not accidental (Sayers, 1980, p. 9). Another example of Marx's analysis is the contradictory character of commodity in capitalist society, which I referred to earlier. Commodities possess in themselves a use-value and an exchange value, and thus reveal their fundamental concreteness (Il'enkov, 1982).

The notion of contradiction is one of the key concepts in Engeström's theory of expansive learning and methodology of developmental work research (Engeström, 1987). Contradictions manifest themselves, for instance, as tensions and conflicts in work practices, and are revealed and understood through a historical analysis. Engeström has discerned four layers of contradictions: primary inner contradictions existing within each element of the activity system, secondary contradictions between the elements, tertiary contradictions emerging between the dominant and advanced form of activity, and quaternary contradiction existing between the central and neighbouring activities. The concept of contradiction and understanding it as a trigger for change or movement can also be applied, for instance, to mechanical systems in physics. Force, as an example, 'must operate *on* something'. In order to do that, it must 'meet with some resistance in the opposing force. Action implies reaction' (Sayers, 1980, p. 9).

3.5. Concepts and conceptualisation within the dialectical perspective of ascending from the abstract to the concrete

Dialectics is a logic of concepts, concrete and theoretical concepts. Conceptualisation is a dialectical process, which means studying theoretical concepts as contradictory, changing, and dynamic entities instead of ones carrying empirically shared characters (Il'enkov, 1977; Davidov, 1990). In collective practices such as work and organisational settings, people produce language and conceptualise objects, working methods, and work processes. Such culturally developed social practice provides a base for new emerging concepts (Leont'ev, 1978). Collective practices in work organisations, for instance, are embedded in a specific cultural and historical context and are influenced by wider social and societal changes. Thus, also concepts and words develop in relation to changes in society and wider socio-historical processes (Vygotsky, 1987). In other words, societal change is produced by language (or a variety of discourses) and at the same time societal changes produce discourses. Such development is dialectical.

The principle of ascending from the abstract to the concrete following dialectical logic provided the framework for conceptualising public sector customers in this study (Davydov, 1990; Il'enkov, 1977). Ascending from the abstract to the concrete is a process of moving from empirical conceptualisation toward theoretical conceptualisation. Such a process aims at identifying a functional relationship, the foundational contradiction of the complex whole, 'germ cell' (or essence) of objects instead of identifying the shared external qualities and similarities of objects. Concrete means a complex unity of diverse elements, a unity in diversity. Abstract is partial, separated from the complex whole and functional relations (Davydov, 1990; Il'enkov, 1977; Marx, 1867). This logic may contradict everyday speech, in which abstract usually means something scientific and theoretical and concrete something concrete, practical, or material. This however, is not how the concepts are understood in dialectical logic.

3.5.1. Dialectical concepts

Even though there are long traditions in studying conceptualisation as cognitive processes, learning, and knowledge creation Engeström, Pasanen, Toiviainen, and Haavisto (2005, pp. 48-50) argued that studies have been focused on stable concepts and concept formation as a top-down process. Greeno (2012, pp. 310-311) emphasised the need for a scientific understanding of concepts, which is broader than the traditional view focusing on individual categorisation. Engeström and Sannino (2012) also argued that the majority of the studies have been focused on individual learners producing well-defined concepts, even though contemporary society is increasingly faced with having to understand multi-dimensional and complex challenges, phenomena, and concepts. Further, Hyrkkänen (2007, p. 19) argued that traditional studies have reported on concepts as tools for understanding and describing reality, even though concepts have a central role in human activity such as new collective forms of working.

Theoretical concepts have a dual character. First, they are ideal images of objects (empirical), and second, they are also instruments constructing ideal images. The aim of theoretical concept formation is to find the 'initial genetic abstraction' and 'develop it into its full concrete diversity' (Engeström, 1987, p. 242). The opposite of theoretical conceptualisation is classificatory and empirical abstraction. It refers to a classification of objects based on sensory perception and description of external qualities and similarities.

Objects are abstracted and isolated from the context and historical development, resulting in a partial understanding of the concrete whole (Il'enkov 1977; Davydov, 1990). Empirical abstract thinking can lead to a stereotyped way of acting, and thus hinder learning from and about reality, such as in the case of work practices (Virkkunen, Newnham, Nleya, & R. Engeström, 2012). Virkkunen and Ristimäki (2012, p. 275) argue that empirical and theoretical concepts share the process of abstracting something general, but the generality abstracted is different.

I do not argue that empirical concepts are bad and theoretical concepts good or that the former are unnecessary. They both are necessary, but their use has different aims and objectives regarding what ought to be explained or understood in certain contexts. Theoretical conceptualisation is not possible without empirical abstraction (Il'enkov, 1982, p. 37).

3.5.2. Everyday concepts and scientific concepts

In the field of psychology, Vygotsky (1987) studied the development of concepts in children's thinking. He analysed scientific and everyday concepts, which develop in interaction with each other as a unit of one conceptualisation process; thus, not opposing or fighting each other. Scientific concepts are systemic and emphasise discursive actions. They develop, for instance, in schools or research-based discussions, and lack interaction with humans' personal experience. Everyday concepts are partial and have a personal relation to daily experience. They do not show an ability for abstraction. Scientific concepts develop from the top down and everyday concepts from the bottom up, thus creating a creative middle in concept formation processes. Also, in the development process Vygotsky analysed movement from collections to complexes, which he considered less mature than scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1987; Greeno, 2012). Vygotsky's theorising was a riposte to a traditional view of concept formation processes, which understood them as vertical top-down processes. Such 'authoritative concepts' are uncontested and unquestioned as they are handed down by authorities (Engeström et al., 2005, p. 50).

Vygotsky (1987) as well as Davydov (1990) did extensive studies on concepts and concept formation. They both were ontologically committed to dialectics and materialism in exploring human development and learning, but their theorising of concepts differed to some extent from each other. Davydov as a follower of the pioneers of activity theory and cultural psychology valued Vygotsky's work on concepts, but addressed problems in his approach. Davydov considered Vygotsky's theorisation as pre-dialectical rather than dialectical due to its separation of everyday concepts and scientific concepts. Further, Davydov argued that Vygotsky favoured scientific concepts and underestimated systems of everyday or empirical concepts.

Greeno (2012, p. 311), one of the contemporary researchers in the field of cultural-historical activity theory, followed Vygotsky's theorisation. Greeno separated formal concepts (or concepts used formally) and functional concepts (or concepts used functionally). Greeno writes:

By formal concept (or a formal use of a concept) I refer to a cognitive entity that has a reference class that is determined by an explicit definition and that is used in a system of formal deductive reasoning – that is, a system that uses formal logic or mathematics to derive implication of assertions. By a functional concept (or a

functional use of a concept) I refer to a cognitive entity that has meaning in a kind of activity, in which it contributes to the way participants organise their understanding of what they are doing (Greeno, 2012, p. 311).

Formal concepts are a subset of functional concepts, and the former support organisation of activity. Further, formal concepts have ‘properties of being defined explicitly and occurring in formal arguments’, for instance, in historically evolved discourse practices in different disciplines (Greeno, 2012, p. 312).

In business environments, various management tools, such as business strategies guiding the activity of firms, are to a large extent based on empirical generalisations, preventing the management from reconceptualising and developing their business (Virkkunen & Ristimäki, 2012). Customer discourse, for instance, can be used as a strategic tool in management practices in the business and public sectors. The danger is that it can be handed down by authorities and remain empirical abstractions, thus preventing development of organisations in the way Virkkunen and Ristimäki explained.

Bringing in Vygotsky’s (1987) idea of the creative middle in conceptualisation processes can assist theoretical conceptualisation and overcome problems and challenges that abstract management tools initiate. In the creative middle, spontaneous bottom-up concepts and scientific top-down concepts meet, leading the way to collaborative and vertical concept formation, and ascending from the abstract to the concrete (Engeström et al., 2005).

My study follows the cultural-historical activity theory tradition, which puts central importance on multiple perspectives and voices in work and organisational settings. Further, it aims to conceptualise and understand local practice as well as wider societal and organisational changes (Bakhurst 2009, p. 205; Engeström 2001, p. 135). Epistemologically the research is conducted within the framework of the principle of ascending from the abstract to the concrete, and it focuses on theoretical concepts. Theoretical concepts are contradictory and historically developed concrete concepts, whose use needs to be studied in a certain context and in movement and transformation which need to be studied in their use in a certain context and in movement and transformation.

In this study the concept of a public sector customer is initially understood as a concept that has been introduced to the public sector by and with marketisation and the New Public Management initiatives. Thus, the concept of public sector customer is an abstract, generalised, and simple concept, which is ‘accepted as far as possible by everyone’ (Il’enkov, 1977, introduction). Further, the concept of customer and related customer discourse are understood as strategic tools that have become empirical abstractions, which to some extent can initiate problems and hinder learning in work contexts.

Analysing the history of the concept of public sector customer and interplay between top-down concepts and bottom-up every day concepts provides a framework with which it is possible to move towards theoretical conceptualisation of public sector customers. Thus, in this study I utilise contextual, empirically collected practice-based data in order to identify how the concept is used in organisational settings, in partial realities of the whole. The aim is to enrich the concept and identify its true nature by bringing together partial realities; that is, to move toward a concrete and contextual understanding of the concept. The analysis moves between language users/producers in organisations in which the language is used/produced, and the larger societal environment in which language is used/produced. They are all in a dialectical relationship.

Further, I approach the concept of customer in the public sector as general discursive practice in organisational settings, which is historically developing and expresses itself in organisations as similar phrases and utterances. My study also recognises that such an entity as a public sector customer that is similar in every context does not exist. My aim is to increase understanding of the multidimensional, changing, and developing concept of customer.

4. RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study involves four public sector organisations and related empirical settings in the fields of elderly care in the City of Espoo, day care in the City of Tampere, road building, maintenance and management in the Finnish Road Administration, and academic library work in the Helsinki University Library. This chapter begins with a short introduction of the research sites and the related projects: *Options of privatization and shared responsibility: organisation of work and mastery of change in new hybrids of private and public sectors* (Hybrid project) and *Knotworking in the Library* (Knotworking project). The City of Espoo, the City of Tampere, and the Finnish Road Administration are the organisations which participated in the Hybrid project and the Helsinki University Library in the Knotworking project. Because of the historical emphasis of the theoretical framework I then provide broad outlines of the history of the four fields of work of my study.

4.1. The four organisations in the study

The City of Espoo

The City of Espoo, located in Southern Finland, is the second largest city in Finland with about 250,000 inhabitants. It is often described as a technologically oriented, rapidly changing, and innovative city. The City of Espoo was recruited into the project because of its collaborative activities with private and third sector service providers. The home care unit for elderly people was chosen to represent the city due to its increasing collaboration with providers from different sectors. During the interviews in 2004 and 2005 the number of inhabitants over 65 years in the City of Espoo was over 20,000, and the estimation for 2015 is 36,000. The number of city employees in elderly care in 2003 and 2004 was about 1,100.

The elderly care unit earlier functioned under the Social and Health Services in the City of Espoo. The reorganisation of the social and health services in 1993 combined these two sectors. The reorganisation was reported to increase customer orientation and reduce costs because of the new division of labour. For instance, home help service and home nursing were combined administratively and functionally to offer better care for elderly people (City of Espoo, 2002, p. 16). The next restructuring of the Social and Health Services was conducted in 2004. The earlier six separate social and health service units were combined into one unit. Structurally, the elderly care unit consisted of five home care centres managed by a home care manager.

With more than 10,000 customers, home care services in the City of Espoo comprised home help services, home nursing, support for close, caring relatives, and support services (e.g. meals, shopping, and transportation). During the project, home care in the City of Espoo was arranged increasingly by using service vouchers and by purchasing services from private and third-sector providers. The external service providers had a two-year blanket agreement with one optional year with the city. In addition, individual agreements were made with some organisations, as well as larger agreements concerning, for instance, night home care. Despite the increased use of outsourced services, the city had not yet taken radical steps toward marketisation, for example, in the form of organising services with the purchaser-provider split. The interviews identified signs of a reduction in outsourced

services along with the reduction in the city's own resources. The interviewees represented care workers from the five areas of the City of Espoo, administrators, and service providers from the private and third-sectors.

The City of Tampere

The City of Tampere is Finland's third largest city with over 220,000 inhabitants, and is one of the two municipal organisations in this study. As of 1 January 2007 the City of Tampere has been led by the principles of the New Management Model, which initiated a large three-dimensional reorganisation in the city. The New Management Model included changes in decision-making structures (model of mayorship), production structures (purchaser-provider split, dividing agents), and administrative structures (process thinking combining sectors). The implementation of the New Management Model was a pioneering step in the sense that it forced a change in the Local Government Act (Nyholm, 2007, p. 3) as well as the Social Welfare Act and Health Care Act, because it contradicted the prevailing legislation (Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle, HE 235/2006 vp, pp. 7-8; Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009, p. 41).

The City of Tampere is now led by an elected mayor, the first one in Finland, and four deputy mayors. The supreme decision-making body of the City of Tampere is the City Council with its 67 members. From the beginning of 2007, committees have been entirely restructured; the new structure was based on process thinking rather than on earlier sector-based assignments.

The purchaser-provider split in the City of Tampere is a process-managed internal purchaser-provider split. Yet, in addition to Tampere's own production, some of the services were purchased from external service providers. Internally, budget funding is longer allocated to the service providers, but the income is based on customers' fees. Also, following the market orientation division into purchasers and providers made providers compete with other internal service producers.

The internal purchaser-provider split divided purchaser and provider organisations administratively, but both were managed on the basis of process thinking combining sectors. The activity of purchasers was formed around six core processes, one of which was child and youth services. The provider organisation functioned under one unit called the Welfare Services. It combined social and primary health care services, institutional care, specialised care, day care and basic education, upper secondary education, culture and leisure services, and the Sara Hildén art museum.

The process of planning and implementing the purchaser-provider split started as early as in 2002, and the main decisions regarding the principles, schedule of the new model and structure of the concern were made in the following year. The reform was expected to respond to a number of needs: to clarify the political nature of planning, strengthen political decision making, clarify the division of labour between the political leadership and civil servants and between the purchaser and provider, and to ensure a more efficient and customer-oriented approach in service production.

In 2005 and 2006, prior to full implementation of the New Management Model, some development projects and pilots were carried out in the day care context, including co-operation between day care and primary school, increase in employees' cost awareness, and improvement of democracy among citizens. The most relevant of these for this study were the *Peppi*, *Peppi-10* and *Tiltu pilots*, which aimed to produce a practical proposal for the New Management Model, and which could also be utilised in other fields of services in the

City of Tampere (Kalliomäki, Kola-Torvinen, Mäkelä, Porrassalmi, & Viitasaari, 2006; Salmelin & Komonen, 2007).

The data collected was aimed at a development project whose object was to record the experiences of a purchaser-provider split pilot; thus, the day care and pre-school units were chosen. The City of Tampere has public day care centres providing services for over 6,600 children and private day care centres serving over 220 children in 2006. The school organisation consisted of 50 schools with over 17,000 pupils in 2006 (City of Tampere, 2008). The decision to study the day care and pre-school units was made by the city administrators, and it was based on their experiences from earlier projects. Since most of the collected data came from day care, this study focuses on day care activities.

The Finnish Road Administration

The Finnish Road Administration has a short history as an organisation. It was a state level organisation operating between 2001 and 2009 under the Ministry of Transport and Communications. In 2001 the former governmental agent The Finnish National Road Administration was split into a purchaser organisation The Finnish Road Administration and a state-owned provider organisation The Finnish Road Enterprise (now Destia) in (see Schaupp, 2011).

The emergence of new kinds of business-based procedures and the move towards a purchaser-provider split already began in the 1980s. The main reorganisation leading the way towards a purchaser-provider split was the division of the production and official services in 1998. The change impacted on, for example, internal competition and negotiated contracts, and initiated new working methods (Finnish Road Administration, 2003b).

After the division in 2001 the Finnish Road Administration assumed the role of purchaser and specialist organisation operating entirely as an administrator without engaging in road building in practice. Its new position as a societal agent also changed the organisation's identity. The change entailed becoming an administrative agent, as well as a market-oriented and customer-oriented organisation. The Finnish Road Administration purchased services from providers by implementing open competitive tendering procedures. Also, the organisation had begun to use the 'life cycle model', which, it was argued, was more economical for purchasers and the society in the long run (see Jokela, 2002). A new long-lasting partnership model for road maintenance and management was also introduced after the division.

The change initiated the need for new capabilities, such as skills in purchasing, contracting, legal issues, and marketing. Also, different parts of the organisation were responsible for specifying and purchasing the products and services, which created the need for new kinds of working methods. The organisation became increasingly involved in international co-operation with foreign road administrators and other international organisations.

For this study the Finnish Road Administration was recruited due to the new implemented life cycle model and participation of boundary-crossing agents in the building of the E18 motorway. In 2005 the Finnish Road Administration employed about 960 people and managed about 78,000 km of public roads. It was responsible for Finland's highway network, planning, maintaining, and developing transport systems in co-operation with other authorities. The main duties of the Finnish Road Administration were offering official authority services (e.g. permits and agreements regarding the use of roads) and information services. Since customers were one of the Finnish Road Administration's core processes,

their strategy emphasised customer focus. Their customers were defined as road-users, transportation users, information service users, and official service users (Finnish Road Administration, 2003a; Finnish Road Administration, 2006).

In 2010 the Finnish Rail Administration, the Finnish Maritime Administration, and the Finnish Road Administration were merged, and a new agency, the Finnish Transport Agency was established. The Finnish Road Administration became a department of the new agency. Its duties remained mainly the same after the merge.

Helsinki University Library

The Helsinki University Library, with approximately 250 employees, is Finland's largest multidisciplinary academic library, and aims to be among the leading multidisciplinary university libraries in the world by 2020. Its annual budget is over 21 million Euros and it handles annually about 2.5 million loans.

The library in its present state was founded in 2010 after an extensive development period lasting from 1993 to 2010. In 1993 the library was dispersed over 160 different locations and by 2010 over 10 locations, but following the recommendations of international evaluations a single university library was established. The structural development of the library was completed in 2012 when the Kaisa Building was opened. The new building brought together a majority of the small libraries that were earlier located in eleven different places. Currently the Helsinki University Library consists of four subject-specific campus libraries in Meilahti, Kumpula, Viikki, and the City Centre, as well as the centralised library services.

The former library organisation became the National Library of Finland since 2006. Like the Helsinki University Library it is an independent institute. The main tasks of the National Library of Finland are the collection, description, preservation, and accessibility of Finland's printed national heritage. It also serves as a centre of development for libraries in Finland as well as for international co-operation. For example, the Helsinki University Library and the National Library of Finland have made a service agreement, according to which the latter is a service producer for their customer, the Helsinki University Library (Engeström et al., 2012, p. 390).

Over the past few decades academic libraries have encountered pressures to develop and innovate new ways of working and new services for their customers. The pressures have to a great extent change been initiated by technical development underway outside of libraries. The Helsinki University Library has been a forerunner in national and international contexts in responding to challenges by developing their services together with their customers. A Change Laboratory intervention (Knotworking project) to develop the library's work was conducted between 2009 and 2011.

4.1.1. Overview of the four organisations

All the organisations in this study came from different fields of work in Southern Finland. The Finnish Road Administration differed from the other organisations in that the interviewees were mainly administrators having no direct service contact with customers on a daily basis. As of 2001 the Finnish Road Administration had become a purely purchasing organisation, thus following fundamentally the New Public Management doctrine.

The City of Espoo and the City of Tampere were similar due to their provision of statutory services for citizens. Also, the interviewees worked to a large extent in direct interaction with their customers. The City of Tampere, however, differed from the City of

Espoo, since it was in a process of implementing an internal purchaser-provider split model. Service production in the City of Espoo, on the other hand, was increasingly organised as outsourced services, but no radical reorganisation based on the New Public Management had been conducted. Both organisations complemented their own service production with private and third sector service providers.

The difference between the Helsinki University Library and the other organisations was that the library did not provide statutory services and their services were mainly free of charge for their customers. Radical New Public Management procedures, such as a purchaser-provider split or outsourcing, had not been conducted in the library organisation and use of private service providers was minimal.

In the following figure (figure 1) I position the studied organisation within the framework of marketisation provided by Anttonen and Meagher (2013, p. 16). Their four-field conceptualisation is useful in framing the dynamics of marketisation and the New Public Management implementations in the public sector. Positioning the organisations under study in the four-fields shows the different character of each organisation in regard to market-oriented activities. It also provides insight into the intensity of business-based principles and approaches guiding the service provision in each organisation.

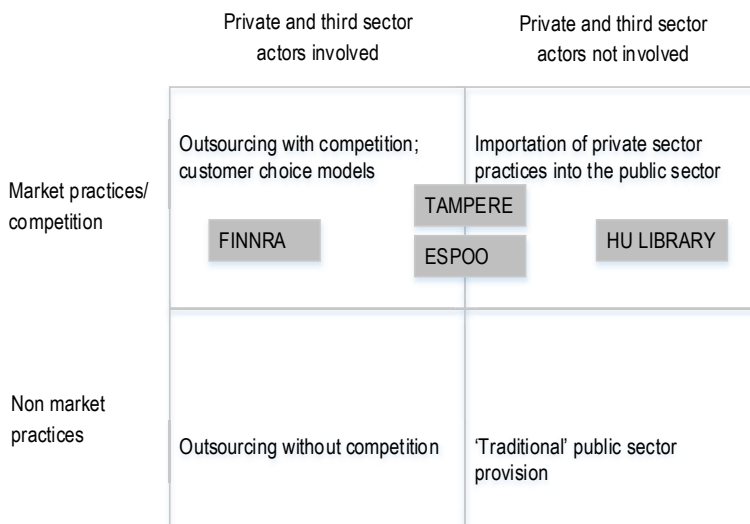


Figure 1. Positioning of organisations within the framework of marketisation (Anttonen & Meagher, 2013, p. 16, modified)

4.2. The two research projects in the study

Options of Privatization and Shared Responsibility

The research and development project *Options of privatization and shared responsibility: organisation of work and mastery of change in new hybrids of private and public sectors*³ (Hybrid project) was financed by the Finnish Ministry of Labour and it was part of a larger Workplace Development Programme operated by the ministry (Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009). The main objective of the project was to examine various forms of hybrid organisations, by which was meant public, private, and/or third sector organisations working together in close co-operation (see Kaatrakoski, 2009). Further, the aim was to conduct interventions and to develop an intervention method for such organisations. Five organisations⁴ were recruited to the project, three of which were chosen for this study: the City of Espoo, the Finnish Road Administration, and the City of Tampere.

The project was conducted between 2004 and 2008, and was divided into two parts. In the first part, from 2004 to 2005, representatives from the Finnish Road Administration and the City of Espoo were interviewed in order to collect background information for the planned intervention. A Change Laboratory intervention was conducted in Finex Oy.

The object of the research and development project in the Finnish Road Administration was the building of the E18 motorway in southern Finland between Helsinki and Turku. The main interest was the life cycle model implemented, the contract negotiations, and participation of multiple agents in the building project. The process, however, did not proceed as planned and the researchers decided not to conduct interventions in the Finnish Road Administration. The reason for the cancellation was the scale and timing of the E18 motorway building project. The discussion with the representatives of the Finnish Road Administration revealed that the building project was already in the compulsory tendering phase, making the data collection in the negotiation phase (one of the main objects of the project) impossible. The researchers, however, carried out interviews in the Finnish Road Administration to finalise the planning phase.

In the City of Espoo the objective of the project was to develop co-operation between public, private, and third sector service providers. Thus, the home care unit for the elderly was chosen for the project since it increasingly collaborated with providers from different sectors. The researchers, however, cancelled the planned intervention in the City of Espoo. The main reason for withdrawing was another project with similar objectives underway in the elderly care unit. The project was called the KIMPPA project and was conducted by researchers from the Helsinki University of Technology. Eventually, the researchers from both universities collaborated on conducting the majority of the interviews. The second phase of the project was conducted between 2006 and 2008. Two new organisations were recruited to participate in the project: the City of Tampere and the Work Foundation Tekevä. The interview data was collected and interventions conducted in 2006 and 2007. Since the objective of this study is to explore the concept of customer in public sector organisations, the only data included in the analysis is from the City of Tampere.

³ Management of the project was shared by Professor Yrjö Engeström and PhD Jaana Pirkkalainen. The project researcher was Heli Kaatrakoski, and undergraduate students Anu Metsäpelto and Anna-Mari Matikainen assisted in data collection.

⁴ The five organizations were: Finex Oy, the City of Espoo, the Finnish Road Administration, the City of Tampere, and the Work Foundation Tekevä.

Prior to the intervention in the City of Tampere the researchers arranged a seminar to clarify the objectives of the project and to recruit units to participate in the project. Four day care and primary school units located physically in the same building, so- called, ‘joint units’, were recruited to the project. In addition, two day care managers from external service providers were interviewed, but they were not able to participate in the development sessions. The intervention was held between September 2006 and January 2007, and the interviews were carried out about six months earlier.

The project produced four critical points as suggestions to improve work practices (Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009):

- Strengthen citizens’ understanding of the responsibilities and decision making involved in the new model, and the ability to influence the production level (regional democracy, customer aspect)
- Strengthen the dialogue between provider and purchaser (purchaser’s substance and contracting skills, personnel’s position, division of labour in evaluation)
- Improve co-operation and the division of responsibility between occupational groups (collective bargaining contract, legislation)
- Accept and pilot different and unusual management approaches and trust the knowhow of production units and middle level management.

Knotworking in the Library

Knotworking in the Library project (Knotworking project) was conducted between 2009 and 2011 in the Helsinki University Library on two campuses: the Viikki and City Centre Campuses (Engeström et al., 2012; Engeström, Rantavuori, & Kerosuo, 2013).⁵ The method for development was the Change Laboratory (Engeström, 2007b; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013).

The initiative for the project came from the library management, but the University of Helsinki’s Centre for Properties and Facilities, which at the time was responsible for the new library building under construction (Kaisa), financed the project. The objective of the Knotworking project was to support library professionals to develop their services to meet research group customers’ needs; to develop, model and test the collaborative knotworking model with customers (Engeström, Engeström & Vähäaho, 1999); to develop practices in the new library organisation; and to collect feedback from research group customers regarding the new building.

Putting primacy on research group customers was one of the library’s strategic goals with which it aimed to respond to new demands in library work. Digitisation of material and diminishing resources made innovating and developing new services and new ways of working a necessity (see Brindley, 2006). In Sweden, for instance, a similar movement toward focusing on researchers and researchers’ work was taking place. Hansson and Johannesson (2013, p. 239) explained that ‘After a couple of decades of a strong customer-oriented ideology focusing on ever increasing numbers of undergraduate students, academic libraries in Sweden are now turning their interest back to their original patrons – the researchers.’

⁵ CRADLE researchers in the Knotworking in the Library project were Professor Yrjö Engeström and PhD students Heli Kaatrakoski, Anne Laitinen, and Juhana Rantavuori. In addition, a library professional Heli Myllys was a member of the research group. Johanna Lahikainen, who represented the City Centre Campus Library, was a key person in the project and its realisation.

The first phase of the Knotworking in the Library project was conducted at the Viikki Campus Library in 2009, and the second phase, which provided data for this thesis, in the City Centre Campus Library in 2010 and 2011. The City Centre Campus Library serves five faculties: the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Theology. The participants for the Change Laboratory intervention came from four research groups: Cognitive Science from the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences; The Construing Reader in the Framework of the Media Concept Project (Finnish Language) from the Faculty of Arts, New Media Environment; Challenges for Copyright from Communication Law in the Faculty of Law; and Politics of Philosophy and Gender (Gender Studies) from the Faculty of Arts. About 20 library professionals participated in eight weekly sessions and two follow-up sessions in 2011.

The intervention provided three main results. First, a service palette that can be used by the librarians when offering and marketing services for research group customers (including development of the FeedNavigator and Quick Reference Guide). Second, a change in librarians' ways of working towards knotworking; and third, an initiative for a new organisation model at the City Centre Campus Library.

4.3. Historical background of the four fields of work in the study

In Finland the public sector is a part of the national economy and is owned by the state or municipalities being financed mainly by taxation. Finland, as a sovereign state, is fairly young. It was first part of Sweden until 1809, when it was annexed to the Russian empire. In 1917 Finland attained independence and the state was developed first following socialist ideas, and later Nordic welfare state principles (Pihlajaniemi, 2006, p. 12).⁶ The welfare state is a system in which the state collects taxes to financially help citizens in various situations with the aim of maintaining equality among citizens (Kajanoja, 2005, p. 118). Municipalities in Finland have a longer history than the state and in the beginning they operated closely with the church. Officially, municipal administration was created in 1865, leading the way to separation from the church. The first duties municipalities had were focused on poor relief and later expanded to the areas of social, health, and educational needs in accordance with welfare state principles (Pihlajaniemi, 2006, pp. 13-18).

Systematic welfare state building in Finland started after the Second World War. In the first decades after the war, Finland was an agricultural and industrial state, but in the 1980s the proportion of industries began to decrease and give way to the new service society. In the same decade neoliberalism and the New Public Management approach started to spread to the public sector. In the 1990s the challenge of a diminishing industrial sector was recognised as calling for a new conceptualisation of work and employment (Koskiahio, 2006, p. 10). Reorganisation of the public sector by using business-based tools continued. The capital markets were liberalised in the 1980s, and globalisation and financialisation began to sprout in Finland in the 1990s. During the decade the welfare state faced a serious crisis due to a recession. The employment rate decreased nearly 15 %, the state cut social security, and differences in income as well as inequality began gradually to grow. Also, in 1993 the system of state subsidies was changed, giving municipalities more freedom to allocate their resources. However, the amount of subsidies was reduced, leaving

⁶ The Western welfare states are divided into Anglo Saxon liberal, Central European corporative and Nordic social democratic models (Saari 2005, p. 31).

municipalities to struggle more or less alone with fewer resources (Pihlajaniemi, 2006, p. 24). The latest global recession hit Finland as it did many other Western countries in 2008. The recession has had severe consequences in the society. The unemployment rate has risen and there has been pressure to reduce the services organised by the public sector.

I have provided a brief introduction to the historical roots of the public sector in Finland, and how Finnish society has been built up by following the principles of democracy and the welfare state. I now continue by reviewing the development of the four fields of work in my study in their cultural and historical context in the public sector. I begin by sketching the history of elderly care, day care, road building, maintenance and management, and academic library work. At the end I summarise the findings.

4.3.1. Development of elderly care in Finland

The main sources for the historical review of elderly care are studies conducted by Jorma Mäkitalo (2005) and Leena Paasivaara (2003). In addition, I used a number of national reports and papers elaborating the history and changes in elderly care.

Movement between integrated and isolated elderly people (before the 1930s)

Prior to the systematic elderly care organised by the public sector, elderly people mainly lived with their own families and next of kin or other members of the community. They were integrated in the social life by participating in home and farm work as long as they were able to. There was no extensive need for institutionalised elderly care. Only those individuals without families, orphans, or persons needing special care, such as the mentally ill, handicapped, or destitute were taken care of in institutions, initially in almshouses. Elderly people were to some extent 'stored' in institutions with other underprivileged groups. Since one of the first duties the municipalities had was poor relief, including care in almshouses for elderly people, almshouses were run by municipalities. In the 1920s almshouses were gradually replaced by municipal homes in which elderly people were given farm work or other tasks in order to pay their living costs. Such institutions were rather isolated from the municipalities and they formed their own communities (Paasivaara, 2003, p. 59). Hence, elderly people were to some extent excluded from the rest of the society.

Despite the exclusion policy, there were attempts in the 1920s to keep elderly people among their own families (Paasivaara, 2003, pp. 46-47). The social policy principles aimed at obligating families morally to provide maintenance for their ageing relatives. The same principles were extended to employers, who were given responsibility to provide maintenance, a kind of pension, for employees who had worked and earned their living in the same organisation over the previous twenty years.

From faceless mass towards persons with needs (1930s –1980s)

The initiatives for formally organised elderly care took place in the 1930s and 1940s. The poor relief laws (in 1922 and 1934) were implemented and elderly care was considered as part of the public service system. Further, in the 1940s and 1950s the concept of elderly care started to develop, and emphasis on the needs of the elderly as separate from the poor and disabled began to take root in policies (Paasivaara, 2003). Elderly people were now agents

able to participate in the organisation and implementation of care and not only a passive mass receiving services from municipalities.

The trend continued in the 1960s along with innovations in the strategies and ideology of care. Older people were conceptualised as persons with their own life and needs. Municipalities began to build new kinds of homes for the elderly, also with individual rooms. Municipal homes were no longer connected with farm work, and elderly care became a unique field on its own. Further, a rising awareness of the number of aging people called for more profound strategies to take care of their future needs. The change not only concerned elderly people, but care personnel as well. The number and education of personnel increased, the division of labour among care personnel became more distinct, and the hierarchy between different professions more pronounced (Mäkitalo, 2005, p. 136; Paasivaara, 2003, p.79).

The trend of building care homes continued in the 1970s and 1980s, but there was also a movement toward an increasing number of home care and sheltered homes. The ideology of considering the well-being of elderly people and not only, for example, housing conditions, began changing the conceptualisation of elderly care. The principles of customer orientation also began to shape social and health sector work (Maaniittu, 1998, p. 162).

Paasivaara (2003, p. 67) brought up two aspects that affected changes in elderly care. First, the need for institutional care grew, especially because of women's increasing participation in paid work. Also, the political atmosphere of the 1960s supported daughters' rights to move to another locality, away from parents, to work and earn their living. Second, in 1970 a new law was implemented, rescinding the obligation of children to take care of their parents (L 275/ 1970, Changing public welfare law). Gradually, relatives participating in paid work were no longer able to support older people's living at home. The elderly became to some extent a burden and an extra cost for their families (Paasivaara, 2003, p. 67). This change initiated the transfer of responsibilities to municipal and governmental authorities.

Active, influential, independent, and collective customers in service systems (1980s onwards)

In the 1980s and 1990s the service ideology and humanistic and individualistic values, but also the New Public Management doctrine, entered the public sector. The service ideology along with individual needs emphasised 'self-determination principles' and 'objects becoming subjects'. Elderly people needed to be understood as active agents with 'independent initiatives', who had the right to 'live in own home as long as possible' (Mäkitalo, 2005, p. 138; Paasivaara, 2003, pp. 89-90).

The service ideology in elderly care was followed by a more profound idea of service systems combining sectors and service units. Since it appeared that it was not an ideal approach new elderly care strategies were introduced. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (e.g. in 1999 and 2002) published new guidelines for national social and health care in which they emphasised customer orientation, customers' needs and the quality of care in order to serve customers better. In the social sector especially, the customer focus was a countermove against previously dominating control-centred modes of work activities (Paasivaara, 2003, pp. 106-107).

Customer focus on elderly care included the ideas of independent, participatory, influential, and autonomous customers (Maaniittu, 1998, p. 162; Mäkitalo, 2005, p. 138).

To strengthen customer focus strategically, customers' rights to influence and participate in their own care were included in the social legislation. There was also a movement in discourse from interaction between personnel and customers in care towards collection of customer feedback. The movement aimed to emphasise customer focus and good quality care with flexible services (Haverinen, 1998, p. 85; Maaniittu, 1998, pp. 162 and 155). Quality endeavours called for tools to evaluate the quality of services. New evaluation systems were implemented to collect internal, organisational assessment of the functions, and feedback from customers.

Along with quality thinking the idea of customers expanded from individual customers to the network of relatives or those who paid for the services (Tenkanen, 1998, p. 103). Paasivaara (2003, p. 104) reported in her study on a change in relatives' participation in care. Prior to the 1980s relatives were rather passive observers, while the new service culture aimed at connecting them more deeply as active agents. Also, there was a movement in conceptualising elderly care towards an entity with multiple caretakers. In addition to relatives and public sector actors, third and private sectors participated in care activities (ibid., p. 109).

In the 1990s health and social sector encountered several external challenges, such as an economic depression and changes in state subsidies for municipalities (in 1993), which provided more freedom for service organisations. These challenges affected municipalities' activities, for instance, by reducing their financial resources (see e.g. Jylhäsaari, 2001, p. 13; Kerosuo, 2005, p. 60). Today, elderly care is part of the national health and social care system, and based on the Constitution of Finland (Paasivaara, 2003, p. 21). It has developed from a fairly institutionalised mass production towards more customer- and service-oriented care activities. The production of traditional care homes has decreased since the 1990s, making way for modern sheltered houses and home care (Päivärinta, 1998, pp. 219 - 221). Customer orientation and client-centred principles are still strengthening in the public sector at the same time as resources seem to be dwindling, thus creating challenges for service provision in the social and health sectors.

4.3.2. Development of day care in Finland

For the historical review of the development of day care in Finland I utilised studies conducted by Välimäki & Rauhala (2000), Ojala (1993), and Hänninen & Valli (1986). I have, however, complemented the material with other studies and documents.

From 'storage places' towards kindergarten education for socially equal children (1800s -1910s)

The gradual change from an agrarian to an industrial society in Finland increased women's participation in paid work and created the need for organised child care outside the homes. Innovations and new kinds of social initiatives recognising the need for child care were integrated into policies and practice. The first steps were to establish social institutions for children to prevent their neglect mothers were engaged in paid work to earn their living. Typically, child care institutions, known as infant schools, were situated in connection with, for example, factories in which mothers worked. The idea of infant schools that could care for up to 100 infants was originally introduced in Great Britain, one of the leading countries in the process of industrialisation. In Finland the first infant schools were established in

Kokkola and Tampere in 1839 (Ojala, 1993, pp. 14-15; Hänninen & Valli, 1986, p. 24; Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, p. 387).

The concept of children's institutions developed from infant schools to new kinds of day nurseries in which mothers and children were able to be in contact with each other during the working day. Still, day nurseries retained the role of 'storage places' for children in order to 'keep them alive' while their mothers were working. Pedagogical aspects were not introduced in the activities. Later, as a riposte to mass 'pedagogy' or mass care, kindergartens supporting children's growth and development replaced day nurseries (Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, p. 387).

The father of the kindergarten concept was German Friedrich Fröbel, who did not consider children to be small adults, but persons with their own special needs, such as the need for playing and learning. He also recognised the need for educated kindergarten teachers. Uno Cygnaeus brought Fröbel's educational ideology to Finland in the 1880s, and the first kindergarten for poor children in the Nordic Countries was opened in Helsinki in 1888 by Hanna Rothmann (Ojala, 1993, pp. 23-24). The kindergarten concept was different from the day nursery owing to its educational rather than social aspect, and it had a sub-division of a shared educational forum for different social classes (Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, p. 387). In addition, the customers of kindergartens in Finland were children with both working and non-working mothers, implying that women's participation in paid work was not unambiguously the initiative for institutionalised child care (ibid, p. 389). Because of the structure of the clientele, the care in kindergartens was established for part-time rather than long-time care. At the beginning of 1900 the number of kindergartens in Finland was about 10; in less than thirty years the number had risen to 100.

Child protection and emphasis on supporting families socially (1920s–1940s)

At first, kindergartens in Finland functioned under the school administration, but in 1924 they were transferred to the Social Ministry. The implication was that despite educational principles, the Finnish day care system was developed to a great extent as part of the social system and social services aiming at supporting underprivileged families. This tension between social and educational policies was long visible in day care throughout its development (Hänninen & Valli, 1986, p. 134; Petäjämäki & Pokki, 2010, p. 7). Still, the educational aspects were recognised; a two-year pedagogical education was required of those working as kindergarten teachers.

One characteristic of the kindergarten system in Finland was that the political discussion began to demand full-time day care to better meet the needs of homes, children, and mothers (Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, p. 392). In 1930s the first steps for organised day care activities were introduced in connection with the new Law for Child Welfare (Lastensuojelulaki 52/36, 7§) in 1936. The law obliged municipalities to organise support (e.g. institutions and day care centres) for families in bringing up their children (Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, pp. 390-391).

Phase of quiet war and post war time of day care development (1940s–1960s)

The Second World War interrupted the growth and development of the day care system. The atmosphere after the war years idealised homes and home care, encouraging women to stay at home rather than participate in paid work. Also, the rise of agrarianism after the war in the 1940s supported this trend. As a result of the war, the number of divorced or widowed

women had increased; hence social and preventive child protection received great emphasis in day care policies (Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, p. 391).

This phase was a rather quiet one in terms of the development of the day care system. However, the number of centres began to grow, but was only about 350 at the end of 1960 (Hänninen & Valli, 1986, p. 155; Ojala, 1993, p. 29). Considering that Finnish families still lived very much in an agrarian environment in the 1940s and 1950s, the minimal scale of the day care system was not surprising. In addition, the ideology in families at that time originated from the 19th century agrarian environment and did not support the idea of institutional care of children (Ojala 1993, p. 159). In terms of the time scale, Välimäki and Rauhala (2000, p. 400) pointed out that day care is an interesting topic of investigation historically in the sense that despite its 100 years' history, it is a rather new phenomenon from the point of view of families: only one generation has extensive experience of the Finnish day care system.

Phase of welfare state building and intensive development of day care for families (1960s–1980s)

According to Välimäki and Rauhala (2000, p. 394), the 1960s was a phase of transformation in the development of the Finnish day care system largely because of societal structural change, urbanisation, and increasing immigration to Sweden to work. The authors do not see a causal connection between the rise in women's participation in paid work and the intensive institutionalisation of day care, but in the 1960s the problem of insufficient day care system became evident.

Day care became a politically interesting topic, and in 1973 a law for children's day care came into force (Laki lasten päivähoidosta 836:73). The legislation combined the social, care, and educational aspects, and addressed the philosophical conceptions underlying day nursery and kindergarten. The new legislation aimed to increase equality and service users' rights by making day care services accessible to higher-income families as well. An indication of the political importance of the day care system was that research to chart the situation and need of day care in Finland began in the late '60s and early '70s. In the '70s and '80s the development of day care emphasised the expansion of day care places, but also aimed to develop the content of care and educational activities. The tension between the social and educational aspects of day care was still visible in day care policies. In the 1980s, however, it was decided that day care provides general early education for customers (Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, pp. 395-397).

Towards educational partnership and active and participating customers (1990s–)

In the early 1990s, after intensive development of the welfare society, Finland encountered a deep depression, which interrupted further improvements in the day care system. Day care places and the number of personnel were reduced and day care centres closed. The next extensive reform in day care occurred in 1995 when the law of the subjective right to use day care services was implemented. This was a step away from the adult-centred approach towards child-centred education in day care. The new approach emphasised the educational aspect rather than the social aspect, providing every child and parents a chance to use day care services. Earlier, for instance, parental work or studies, poor financial situation, or social reasons were officially accepted arguments for receiving a day care place for children. The new law provided a new definition for day care service users; the customers were

families; no longer just working parents (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2008, p. 34).

In the 2000s a new concept was introduced to day care: educational partnership. Day care services were increasingly understood as carried out in joint partnership with care givers and parents (Kekkonen, 2012). The official entry of the concept took place in 2002, when the new national principles of early education and day care were published (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002). In the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (Heikkilä, Välimäki, & Ihalaainen, 2004) educational partnership was defined as parents' and families' conscious commitment to act together with care workers to support a child's development, growth, and learning. The roles of the personnel and parents were considered equal (Kekkonen, 2012, p. 22).

Along with the introduction of the educational partnership concept, a law for the position and rights of social care customers (812/2000) was implemented, which emphasised customer orientation. Customers were considered active and participating agents with their own rights and responsibilities (Kylliö, 2012, p. 15). Also, quality discourse strengthened its position in the 2000s even though the concept of quality in the day care context had begun to receive more attention as early as the 1980s (City of Tampere, 2006, p. 22).

The core activities of day care in present day Finland are care giving, upbringing, and educating, thus a combination of social and educational dimensions. In international day care discourse the Finnish (and Nordic) system is called Educare: Education and Care Giving together (Petäjaniemi & Pokki, 2010, p. 12; Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, p. 400). One objective for the future is to provide quality services in a customer-oriented way. Customer focus and customer approach and their development are still among the strategic aims, for instance, in the day care context in the City of Tampere. Suggestions for achieving these include: developing interaction between different parties at different levels, and improving customer-oriented services and participatory services (Viitasaari, 2012). The field of early education, however, is facing financial challenges. One is the tension between child care and elderly care, the latter increasingly receiving more political attention, and thus perhaps more financial resources (Välimäki & Rauhala, 2000, p. 401).

4.3.3. Development of road building, maintenance, and management in Finland

My review of the history of road building, maintenance, and management is mainly based on a study of Kimmo Levä (1993), a historical review of the Finnish National Road Administration (Finnish National Road Administration, 1999), and publications edited by Jaakko Heinonen (1999), and Jaakko Masonen and Mauno Hänninen (1995).

The roots of road building organisation and activity go back to 1799 when the Royal Finnish Committee for the Cleaning of Rapids was established. As the name implies, the main objectives of the organisation were cleaning and maintaining water ways instead of building and maintaining roads. This originates from attempts to maintain and develop possibilities for farming in Finland. On the one hand, increased flooding impeded farming and called for actions to prevent farmers from losing their crops. On the other hand, the need for new farming land initiated systematic efforts to dry wetlands. In those days, construction and maintenance of roads were not systematically organised by the government, but the responsibility had been given to private landowners as stipulated by medieval law (Finnish National Road Administration 1999b, pp. 44-45; <http://alk.tiehallinto.fi/tiehist/tiel200.htm>).

Along with industrialisation in the 19th century the amount of road traffic and need for new roads increased in Europe. In Finland at that time, however, the roads were mainly used

by pedestrians and horses. Gradually inhabitants began migrating from the centres of villages and towns to more remote areas, which initiated construction of new roads to meet customers' needs. Such a change in policy was exceptional. When Finland was part of the Swedish Empire roads were mainly built to satisfy the administration's needs, whereas now construction initiatives were realised by following the wishes of local residents. In 1860 the Road and Waterway Transport Board was established to respond to demands for road construction and maintenance. Yet, its responsibilities covered not only roads, but also rails, canals, ports, airports, and telegraph lines (<http://alk.tiehallinto.fi/tiehist/tiel200.htm>; Finnish National Road Administration, 1999b, pp. 8-9).

By the time Finland became an independent country in 1917, about 20,000 kilometres of new roads had been built. Also, after the 1920s the number of cars increased rapidly. Economic life became livelier and roads were in heavy use, especially by business agents. This called for a more systematic and extensive organisation of road management to respond to road users' needs. A major turning point in road management took place when a new law releasing landowners from their road management obligations was passed in 1918 and implemented in 1921. Thus, road management was nationalised and the National Board of Road and Waterways was established in 1925. After the nationalisation, road building and maintenance were partly outsourced, and the division of labour was organised so that rural police chiefs were responsible for small rural roads and small-sized private road builders took care of the main roads. In practice this meant that maintenance of roads was auctioned for three years at a time and a number of different service providers worked in the field. The system was not unproblematic due to the minimal resources the contract organisations had. Occasional uncertainty and confusion about the division of labour and boundaries of responsibilities were evident. In addition, rural police chiefs were not always entirely competent as road managers, which affected the quality of the roads⁷ (Finnish National Road Administration, 1999a; Finnish National Road Administration, 1999b, p. 51).

Development and construction of the road network continued in the 1930s. It was to a large extent financed by using the unemployment budget, and thus prevented an increase in the number of unemployed citizens. The Second World War interrupted growth and ruined the existing transportation networks. Reduced financial resources and lack of a work force made it difficult to repair roads worn by the use of heavy war vehicles and ruined by systematic destruction. Building new roads was not even on the agenda. Also, shared maintenance responsibilities between the National Board of Public Roads and Waterways and County Administrative Boards hindered the work due to problems in division of labour and unorganised working methods (Finnish National Road Administration, 1999b, p. 19).

After the war, financial resources were scarce, which delayed the new development of road management. In the beginning the armed forces took care of mending the roads, but later the responsibility was transferred to the National Board of Public Roads and Waterways. The unemployment rate was high in Finland after the war, and from the 1950s onwards a vast number of the unemployed entered the work force for the construction of roads. In addition, prisoners were allocated work on road building sites (Finnish National Road Administration, 1999a; Finnish National Road Administration, 1999b, p. 20).

⁷ A Finnish phrase, 'nimismiehen kihara', 'a rural police chief's curl' originates from poorly maintained roads with curls or waves (Finnish National Road Administration, 1999a; Finnish National Road Administration, 1999b, p. 51).

In the 1960s the importance of roads grew as cars and lorries increasingly replaced trains in the transportation of goods. During this decade the financial resources to employ unemployed people gradually decreased and loans were taken from the World Bank to rebuild and develop the Finnish society, including road building. The number of new roads rose rapidly to the level we know it now. In 1964 the National Board of Public Roads and Waterways was reorganised and divided into central and district administrations. The National Roads and Waterways Administration was established. The workload of the organisation had grown, and one objective of the reorganisation was to increase its power in the society rather than to make it more efficient and productive. However, budgeting systems were developed to increase the directors' and managers' understanding of economic issues and goal-oriented budgeting, leading the way toward management by results. Rationalisation of work gained influence, and the new management models emphasised productivity. As a result, the National Roads and Waterways Administration increasingly became an organisation which specialised in road management. In the 1970s the water and airport departments were transferred to operate under the water and aviation administration. Hence the organisation was now responsible for roads and road traffic (Levä, 1993, pp. 14-18; Finnish National Road Administration, 1999b, p. 51).

The amount of financial resources for road management increased gradually after the Second World War, but the 1973 oil crisis slowed down such development. Some resources, however, were allocated to road building and maintenance until the 'final crisis' at the time of the recession in the 1990s reduced resources radically. In general, the public sector had grown since the mid-1960s because of new social-political aims to increase welfare by giving social support, and because of the adaptation of a planned economy (efficiency by planning). In the 1970s urbanisation was a prominent social phenomenon in Finland calling for a more extensive traffic network. At the same time the number of private cars and road users increased rapidly. Because of the economic boom in the 1980s, the management of development and construction of roads once again became an issue after the previous decade's lack of activity. Soft values, such as focusing on environmental and ecological aspects received more attention, partly due to the oil crisis in 1973. The new economic boom in the 1980s brought these values into the discourse of road management, and the same trend has continued until now (Levä, 1995, pp. 202-203; Peltola, 1995, pp. 40-42; Finnish National Road Administration, 1999b, p. 71).

Policies in the 1970s and 1980s prepared the National Roads and Waterways Administration for a business style organisation by, for example, introducing management by results procedures, which were eventually implemented in the 1990s. Also, employees were trained to understand road-users as customers, and the objective was supported by a published Customer Strategy. A new organisation, the Finnish National Road Administration was established in 1990; in 1998 the organisation was internally divided into production and administration, leading the way toward a 'pure' purchaser-provider split. In 2001, following the New Public Management ideology, the purchaser-provider split was implemented with the division of the organisation into a provider organisation, the Finnish Road Enterprise (later Destia), and a purchaser organisation, the Finnish Road Administration (Levä, 1993, p. 29; Finnish National Road Administration, 1999b, p. 64). One goal of the reorganisation was to move toward a customer-oriented way of working by purchasing services from free markets. The organisations emphasised customers' needs and satisfaction as the basis for their work.

In 2010 the Finnish Rail Administration, the Finnish Maritime Administration, and the Finnish Road Administration were merged, and a new agency, the Finnish Transport

Agency was established. The Finnish Road Administration became a department of the new agency, but its activities and duties remained mainly the same.

4.3.4. Development of academic library work in Finland

The historical review of academic libraries is mainly based on the works of four publications. The first is Ilkka Mäkinen's (1989) licentiate thesis on the history of academic libraries and information services. The second is Kaisa Sinikara's dissertation (2007) on changes among library staff and management over the last decades in Finland. The third source is Kaisa Sinikara's article (2010) analysing changes in library work, and the fourth is Hanna Kuusi's (2011) extensive history review of the Student Union Library of Helsinki University / Helsinki University Student Library between 1858 and 2009.

One characteristic of academic libraries, in their history and probably in the future, is a constant balancing and adjusting to the requirements of science and higher education policies as well as to changes in society and the economy (Mäkinen, 1989, p. 5; Sinikara, 2007, p. 15). Mäkinen and Sinikara argue that the most intensive periods of change in academic libraries, are:

- after the Second World War in the 1940s,
- at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s,
- in the 1990s and 2000s.

The structure of the historical review follows Mäkinen's and Sinikara's analyses. The first libraries in Finland were small book collections in churches and monasteries. In 1640 the first notable academic library was established in the Academy of Turku, later transferred to Helsinki in 1828. During the time of autonomy under Russia (1809-1917) the number and size of academic libraries were small, being mainly libraries of various scholarly societies (Jokipii, 1997, p. 5). The resources were minimal and libraries often operated without full-time personnel. After Finland became independent in 1917, the number of universities and higher education institutions increased and libraries were established for each higher education organisation. In the beginning, the customers were mainly internal customers: students, teachers, and researchers.

The first marked period of transformation in academic libraries happened after the First and the Second World Wars, at the same time as the whole society was in the process of reconstruction. The war years were understandably times of struggling with few resources and an insufficient infrastructure (Lehtonen, 1996; Lilja, 2001). It is remarkable that the library organisation was able to function in a limited, but a customer-oriented way. At the end of the war years, the university authorities expressed their concern over the number of students interrupting their studies to fulfil military duties. They considered that the lack of education would cause problems regarding the development of the whole Finnish society in the future. Thus, in co-operation with the war management the university planned and developed distance learning possibilities for students at the front. The University Library provided support for studies by sending students reading material despite the difficult circumstances. The library's commitment and support for studying and learning is an example of the customer service spirit the library had. After the war the library received a vast amount of good feedback from the students for enabling their possibilities for studying. Also, even though the library personnel were at the front or participating in war-related

services the library was kept open by a female caretaker who lived in the library building (Kuusi, 2011, pp. 66-69).

The first period of transformation after the wars

During the first period of transformation in the 1940s academic libraries went through extensive reconstruction due to the damages caused by the Second World War. Scarce resources hindered construction and development of the whole society. To survive and overcome the lack of resources the public sector began to follow intensively Taylorism and scientific management models. Librarians also learned 'the discourse of efficiency, rationalism and centralisation' (Mäkinen, 1989, pp. 15 - 17). In the academy library context an additional challenge emerged since the language of course books was gradually changed after the war years from German to English, calling for more resources in order to purchase material for customers (Kuusi, 2001, p. 77).

However, despite the scarce resources, activities at academic libraries became more active, open and directed outside of the libraries, and increasingly customer orientated. Librarians became 'servants instead of conservators' (Mäkinen, 1989, p. 5). In addition, academic libraries became more international with the help of ASLA-grants (United States' grant system assisting to pay back war loans). Thus, libraries had more opportunities to use international databases and participate in international training courses. Book donations were provided from the United States and the Soviet Union, which strongly affected the development of libraries and the content of collections, (Kuusi, 2001, p. 82; Mäkinen, 1989, p. 4).

The 1950s was a decade of construction and provision of new physical resources for libraries. At the same time libraries began to increasingly market their services with lists of new publications, bulletins, and personal contacts by telephone as a new service (Mäkinen, 1989, p. 34). The main users and target groups remained students, teachers, and researchers. Traditionally, in the library context customers have been referred to as users or library users. However, Elsa Bruun (1955) expressed her ideas about customers and customer service as early as the 1950s. She wrote about 'expanding customer service', 'creating customer relations' and 'customers' understanding the possibilities libraries can offer them' (Mäkinen, 1989, pp. 33-34).

The second period of transformation and construction from the 1960s onwards

The 1960s was an active period in developing academic libraries and some of the most important transformations were initiated during this time (Sinikara, 2007, p. 18). First, a new generation with novel ideas for developing activities stepped into managerial positions. For instance, new managers took a new direction by focusing on management and administration instead of pure library work (Mäkinen, 1989, pp. 37-38). Second, following international trends, academic libraries recognised the need to develop ways to increase and acquire new information. Challenges arose mainly from new demands for marketing services, growth of scientific-technical information, and increase in the general level of knowledge demands for supporting political decision-making (ibid, p. 40). Third, during the decade the number of academic publications increased enormously and libraries needed to find ways to manage the growth efficiently (ibid, p. 54). Further, the increasing number and costs of publications forced academic libraries to start co-operating with each other and developing a shared service system to satisfy customers' needs. The change was described as challenging since, on the one hand, librarians were not familiar with researchers' work,

and on the other hand, they 'were not willing to learn new ways of working' (Mäkinen, 1989, p. 93). Fourth, a new, larger generation started studies at universities and accordingly the number of universities increased (Sinikara, 2010, p. 22). Fifth, the system of course books was reorganised after an intensive debate, participated in by both politicians and student organisations (Mäkinen, 1989, p. 73). The understanding of how to develop and who should participate in developing library work and policies was to some extent controversial. Mäkinen (1989, p. 94) brought up a discussion emphasising that responsibility for developing libraries should not be given exclusively to librarians. The argument was that such change would enable administrative aims, instead of scientific-political ones, to lead the library development.

The lines of development actions initiated in the 1960s continued actively during the next decade. The period was a time of rationalisation and centralisation along with an ideology of growth. One aim was to combine academic libraries and information services. The actions were supported by the Tinfo-council and information technology projects (Mäkinen, 1989, p. 89, p. 104). Also, systematic plans for automatisisation of library work were initiated in the 1970s (Sinikara, 2007, p. 18). Based on a literature review, the 1980s was a fairly quiet decade in the history of academic libraries in Finland. The first signs of IT- based tools and expertise began to appear in the library world, but were not widely used until the 1990s, when purchases of e-material increased and physical material decreased (Sinikara, 2007, pp. 18-20).

The third period of transformation towards a customer-oriented library in the 1990s and 2000s

Societal development and conditions shaped the activities in academic libraries in Finland in the 1990s. First, the economic recession had extensive effects on library work. Growing unemployment encouraged more people to study, thus increasing the number of students at the universities. At the same time, however, financial resources decreased and hindered, for instance, book acquisition. Second, the 1990s was a time of expansion of the information society, which called for new digital tools and services for customers in academic libraries as well as at universities (Kuusi, 2011, p. 337; Sinikara, 2007, p. 19).

In the 2000s the trend of digitalisation continued worldwide. The leading change promoters were the increasing number of internet-based services and digital publishing (Brindley 2008, pp. 65-66; Sinikara, 2010, p. 22). Generally, digital services as well as digital learning environments used in higher education developed quickly. Thus, the need for a critical use and reading of different sources initiated a new basic task for librarians: teaching information literacy (Kuusi, 2011, p. 413).

Further, new technologies created demands for librarians to master commercial, legal (open source, copyright), and pedagogical knowledge, and have challenged librarians to constantly learn new things and expand their expertise along with new demands. Today the work increasingly calls for intensive co-operation with university departments, faculties, and national and international colleagues. New kinds of collaborative work require new capabilities, such as negotiation skills. Elisa Hyytiäinen (2010, p. 166) describes librarians' work today as follows:

[e]mployees must have IT, communication, and language skills, they must have internationality, community orientation and team skills, be able to develop themselves and their work, and master and tolerate change. They have to be independent and self-directed, committed, enthusiastic and creative.

Kaisa Sinikari (2007, p. 15) defined the core of academic library work being the collecting and storing of academic and scientific publications as well as analysing and arranging them for students' and researchers' use. It seems, however, that, following Hyytiäinen's argument, the core of academic library work from the perspective of librarians is increasingly consulting and serving. Technical development is probably one of the main change promoters which have influenced not only librarians' work, but also their customers' needs. As an example, some researchers increasingly use large research material, such as long video recordings or EEG recordings; this creates challenges in data management. Further, in Finland researchers have encountered demands from financing organisations to provide research life span plans and detailed research data descriptions in funding applications. Meeting the new requirements are likely to produce challenges for researchers to plan and organise their resources according to these requirements (Engeström et al., 2012).

In order to be customer-oriented and innovate new services which meet customers' needs, librarians need to leave their premises. They need to meet their customers in customers' environments and premises to learn about their work and working methods. Librarians must have the 'willingness and determination to meet users in their own environments, learning their terminologies and their languages, and wholehearted adoption of constructivist notions of how effective learning, and affective research, takes place. In other words librarians need to become much more visible and much more active in the learning and research processes. They need to embrace change' (Brophy, 2007, p. 523). One advantage in collaborative work and learning is the shift from individual learning towards more effective collective learning, also with customers (Engeström, 1987).

More than two decades ago Mäkinen (1989, p. 5) argued that librarians had increasingly adopted a service identity, which replaced the conservation identity. Today this understanding has developed further: librarians are service providers and learning practitioners whose object of work is serving their customers (Brophy, 2007, p. 518; Lossau, 2008, p. 11; Simpson, 2008, p. 90). There has also been a shift from book-centric to customer-centric work (Scupola & Nicolajsen, 2010, p. 304) as well as a need to move from a mass production style of services towards more co-configuration work with customers (Engeström et al., 2012). Further, Hansson and Johannesson (2013) identified a return from focusing primarily on undergraduate students toward paying more attention to the needs of research customers, their original customers.

4.3.5. Summary

In this section, I delineated the historical development of elderly care, day care, road building, maintenance and management, and academic libraries. The main objective of the historical review was to contextualise the four fields of work in their cultural and historical development and thus provide an understanding of the present social reality in the field. The findings support the importance of reviewing history as well as wider social processes in studying local work settings. In addition, the developments mentioned may help to understand challenges which employees, management, and customers face in service encounters in these specific contexts.

The most important findings in regard to my study were, first, those suggesting changes in the object of work in all fields of work. Particularly interesting were evolution from conceptualising customers as an abstract group toward understanding them as persons having a specific character and needs. Such development was identified in the fields of elderly care and day care. The review of elderly care suggested that since the 1930s the conceptualisation of aging people has moved from storing them towards understanding the elderly as persons with their own needs. Further, the review showed a shift from focusing on housing conditions toward focusing on the well-being of the elderly. In the day care context the development moved from storing children in day nurseries towards institutions with educational aims recognising children's needs. The day care system, however, functioned partly in school and partly in the social sector and was therefore developed under both social and educational policies. Conceptualisation of customers evolved from children and working parents toward families as customers.

In road building, maintenance and management a similar development as in elderly care and day care was identified. The object of work was initially cleaning and maintaining of water ways instead of roads. Industrialisation, however, called for more systematic road management and a new organisation was established to support the development and management of roads, but also the development and management of railways and ports. Later, the activity of road management focused only on roads and road traffic. In the academic library context, a blurred conceptualisation of customers and the object of work was not identifiable as it was in the other three fields of work. However, there were shifts in emphasising different customer groups. For a long period of time the main library customers were students, teachers, and researchers. Later, emphasis was on undergraduate students, and a shift towards research customers is occurring today. Changes in the object of work were expressed as serving customers instead of conserving information.

The second important finding was the introduction of the New Public Management initiatives and customer approach in all the work contexts studied. In elderly care in the 1980s and onwards, the service ideology and individualistic values were increasingly implemented in practice. Also, the discourse of customer orientation and new policies emphasised service-users as customers in order to provide good quality care. Day care policies saw a similar development. Day care customers were understood as active and participating parents and families who had rights and responsibilities and were in an equal partnership relation with care providers. In road building, maintenance and management, these policies had already prepared the organisation to become a business-oriented agency since the 1970s and 1980s. The reorganisation, following the New Public Management ideology, was realised in 2001. One of the objectives of the reorganisation was to move toward a customer-oriented way of working and to put central importance on customers' needs and satisfaction. In academic libraries, implementations of the New Public Management initiatives were more modest than in the other organisations. However, a number of the New Public Management tools, as well as principles of customer-orientation, were systematically introduced to academic libraries in the 1990s.

5. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND THE DATA

This study examines the concept of customer in four public sector organisations in Finland. A number of interviews were conducted and documents collected and analysed in order to provide understanding of how the concept had developed and what kind of conceptualisation of customers was produced in the discourse. The data comprised written texts representing institutional discourse (Jokinen, Juhila, & Suoninen, 1993, p. 27; Kvale, 1996). In this analysis interviewees represent institutional and cultural-historical human beings, not individuals expressing their ideal understanding of customers.

When choosing which methodology and methods of analysis to use in a study, it is the character of each research case that acts as a guide toward adequate choices. Decisions are made in accordance with the research questions, the data, and theoretical principles (Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 2005). Researchers need to ask: What do I want to know? How do I collect the data to answer the questions? How do I analyse the data to find the answers?

Considering the objective of the study and the character of the data, a qualitative approach appeared to be an adequate choice. I used quantification to some extent to report and structure the findings, but as a primary method of analysis I did not consider it as a valid method. Qualitative discourse analysis is more appropriate for analysing conceptualisation in certain cultural-historical contexts.

The challenge with qualitative interview data is that there are neither common rules for collection nor standard procedures for analysing them. Kvale describes the challenges of interview research as 'a craft that, if well carried out, can become an art' (Kvale, 1996, p. 13). This challenge applies also to discursive approaches and discourse analysis methods. Discursive analyses can focus on different aspects of language use and conceptualisation in a variety of interactions and contexts and follow a number of research traditions such as critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and sociolinguistics (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yater, 2001). In practice, an analysis method not having standardised rules, as described above, is likely to be multi-layered and moving constantly between theory, methodology, and data through trials and errors.

5.1. Analysing discourse

In this study I analyse discourse. Discourse here means spoken or written language used in a certain institutional context in interaction with others. Further, discourses are understood to have the tendency to become generalised and accepted as truth in everyday practices (Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen, 1993, p. 27; Wells, 2007, p. 160). Related concepts to discourse are, for instance, systems of meaning, interpretative repertoire, and frame (Mankkinen, 2010, p. 95). In some discourse analysis traditions discourse is understood to include other methods of communication, such as visual pictures and gestures (Fairclough, 2003, p. 24), but in this study I understand discourse as being in linguistic forms. Discourses can be analysed by 1) focusing strictly on the data, 2) by expanding the analysis to cultural perspectives, and 3) by relating discourses to societal, economic, and political processes and power issues (Törrönen, 2005, p. 139).

I consider my study as being related, first, to social constructivism, since the objective of my study was to explore how reality was produced in discourse in a variety of social practices. In social constructivism the interest lies in understanding language as part of reality. Analyses are conducted to reveal how and with which methods, for instance, a

customer is defined and constructed. The aim is not to find out why interviewees talk about customers the way they do (Jokinen, Juhila, & Suoninen, 1993, pp 9-10).

Second, my study resembles Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003) due to its cultural, societal, and economic focus, and critical examination of neoliberal discourse. However, my study lacks an analysis of issues of power, which are of central importance in critical discourse analysis. In the following I present the basics of critical discourse analysis and how it is understood in the framework of activity theory and this study.

Fairclough divides discourse analysis into three interlinked levels: 1) the textual level focusing on linguistic features of discourse (description, linguistics), 2) the discursive practice focusing on text production and consumption (interpretation, micro-sociology, and 3) the social practice focusing on the institutional, organizational, and societal context (explanation, macro-sociology). The strength of critical discourse analysis is its attempt to bridge the gap between a micro-linguistic level analysis and a macro-institutional and societal level of analysis in a dialectical way (Törrönen, 2005, p.142; Weiss & Wodak, 2003). However, in the field of activity theory some criticism has been raised regarding the approach. For instance, despite its aims, it is claimed to separate discourse and object-oriented productive activity; to understand discourse as a 'self-sufficient modality of interaction'; to fail to develop the approach further; to understand context in a limited way; and to fail to present empirically collected data during fieldwork periods, thus lacking real context (Collins, 1999; Engeström 1999b, p. 88; see also Collins & Jones, 2006; Jones & Collins, 2006, and Jones, 2007).

In this study social constructivism and critical discourse analysis were utilised as tools to increase an understanding of discursive processes from multiple perspectives prior to the actual analysis, while cultural-historical activity theory provided the theoretical and methodological frame for the study. The notion of object was the key concept with which to examine the phenomenon under study. The aim was to investigate how the interviewees and documents provided a conceptualisation of customers as an object of work in organisational settings and in different activity systems. In other words, the interest lies on how language mediated a conceptualisation of customers.

At the discursive level the focus of analysis was on the forms and thematic content of discourses. For instance, I used linguistic cues to identify active or passive verbs in the discourse, but also thematic utterances revealing the theme under discussion. Being committed to a materialistic ontology and epistemology, in cultural-historical activity theory discourses are understood as having historical and social origins. Discourses are in a dialectical relationship with a 'particular and concrete' context, forming a unity which cannot be ontologically separated (Collins, 1999, p. 172). Context or contextuality is not environment, something that influences discourse or activity, but instead, it is part of activity and discourse (Cole, 1996). Further, it does not refer to a study design where discourse is analysed abstractly and later 'contextualised' with a historical review (Collins & Jones, 2006, p. 64). Discursive analysis needs to be conducted by recognising its cultural-historical context, and the changing character of the phenomenon under study.

The starting point of the study was an elaboration of the concept of customer, which was originally introduced to the public sector by neoliberalism and the New Public Management approach. In the first chapter I introduced the New Public Management and showed that one of its key concepts was the customer. Thus, I integrated the historical and cultural aspects

with an understanding of the development of the concept at the beginning of the research process.

The primary objective of interview data collection was to collect background information (mirror data) for a Change Laboratory intervention (Engeström, 1987; Virkkunen et al., 2012) or its application. However, the data collected in the intervention sessions are not utilised in the analysis. Hence, the data in this study do not allow analysing the realisation of discourse as such, but instead, emphasis is put on historicity and historical document analysis. Thus, historical analysis is conducted not only to follow development of the concept, but also to support interview analysis in order to provide a more concrete basis for the study.

The data analysis also differs from typical developmental work research studies and Change Laboratory intervention (Engeström, 1987) analyses in the sense that I did not use the intermediate concept of contradiction, for instance, to analyse empirically perceived conflicts at work. Instead, tensions and conflicts were empirically identified by analysing the object of customer with a variety of intermediate conceptual dimensions focusing on a discursively produced and constructed ‘understanding’ of customers. Empirically analysed tensions provided clues for theoretically exploring the contradictions initiating such tensions. Further, the analysis in this study was conducted ‘the wrong way around’ compared with tradition developmental work research studies. This study begins with an investigation of conceptualisation processes in the larger context, and the introduction of the New Public Management to the public sector. The analysis is carried out by examining the concept of customer in contextual use with the aim of providing a richer understanding of the concept. In regard to contradictions, in the Change Laboratory interventions the starting point is identification of conflicts and tensions in the local work context.

5.2. Interview data collection

I used semi-structured interviews to collect the data. A semi-structured interview (Kvale, 1996) contains questions covering the themes or topics under study, but provides flexibility for the interviewer to proceed in what she/he considers the most purposeful way. For example, the order of the questions presented in a semi-structure interview is not strictly fixed; the interviewer can change it depending on the answers and the whole interview process. Also, changes in wording as well as additional questions are allowed (ibid., p. 129).

The interview data were collected between 2004 and 2010, and they were conducted in Finnish by four researchers⁸. The interviews were video and/or audio recorded. The decisions concerning the research process and data collection were made collectively by the researchers, whereas I have been responsible for building and conducting the analysis for this dissertation.

The data, 16 interviews in the City of Espoo (elderly care), were collected during the winter and spring of 2004 and 2005. The interviewees were nurses, head nurses, home care managers, doctors, directors on various levels and specialists (e.g. a work hygienist). The interviewees included a chief shop steward and a representative from Espoo’s Council for the Elderly. Also, four external producer representatives from two organisations (directors, a project planner and a service manager) were interviewed in order to establish a multi-

⁸ In the City of Espoo the interviews were conducted by Jaana Pirkkalainen, Anu Metsäpelto, and a member of the SimLab research group from the Helsinki University of Technology. In the Finnish Road Administration, the City of Tampere, and the City Centre Campus Library the interviews were conducted by Heli Kaatrakoski.

voiced understanding of the current state of service production. The majority of the interviewees (13) were in direct interaction with customers and in customer service.

The number and professional structure of the interviewees (total 16) were as follows:

- Employees 10
- Chief shop stewards 1
- The City of Espoo's Council for the Elderly representative 1
- External provider representatives 4

In the City of Tampere the interviews (19) were conducted during spring and summer 2006, about six months prior to the intervention. The intervention aimed to record experiences of a purchaser-provider split pilot and co-operation with schools and day care centres, and to find solutions to the identified problems and challenges. The intervention was held between September 2006 and January 2007 (see Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009). The interviewees were teachers, preschool teachers, and day care centre managers. Participants from the administration comprised managers and directors from the purchaser and provider sides, research and evaluation, and club activity. In addition, the interviewees were private day care managers as well as elected officials from different political parties representing both the purchaser and the provider side. In the City of Tampere we had different thematic interview questionnaires for employees, elected officials, and administration. Of the interviewees 11 out of 19 worked in interaction with their customers. The number and professional structure of the interviewees (total 19) was:

- Employees 9
- Administration 4
- Private day care centres' representatives 2
- Elected officials 4

The representatives (12) of the Finnish Road Administration were interviewed during winter 2004 and summer 2005. The interviewees came from different areas of the organisation: infra-building, maintenance, purchasing, law and research, and represented a variety of specialists and managers. In addition, one representative from the Ministry of Transport and Communications and one producer representative were interviewed. The number and structure of the interviewees (total 14) was as follows:

- Employees 12
- Ministry of Transport and Communications representative 1
- Provider representative⁹ 1

During the project the researchers struggled with the focus of the study. Hence three different structures for interviews were created: one general one concerning the organisation and its activities, one connected to the E18 motorway, and one which focused on comparing

⁹ The person was interviewed because of a previous position in FINNRA and in that sense did not represent a service provider.

the E18 motorway and the Helsinki-Lahti Motorway. The Helsinki-Lahti Motorway was the first motorway in Finland which was built on the life cycle model.

The Helsinki University City Centre Campus Library was the last organisation in which the data were collected, in spring and summer 2010. The interviews (4) were conducted in order to collect information for the coming intervention, which aimed to create a new kind of collaboration between librarians and research group customers through knotworking (Engeström et al., 2012). The intervention was conducted during the autumn and winter of 2010. Three of the interviewees (total 4) were from the grass-root level (3) and one from the managerial level (1). The number of interviewees was very low and thus not very representative. However, they provided an important understanding of the prevailing work in academic libraries and in the public sector.

The structures of interview themes of each organisation are in Appendices 1-4. The interview questions were related to 'the topic of the interview' and 'the theoretical conceptions' (Kvale, 1996, p. 129), such as opinions of the current work situation, customer orientation, object of work, and historical events. The interviewees were not asked directly to define their customers.

Some notes were made during the interviews, but they were not used in the systematic analysis. Also, newspaper and magazine clippings (156) were collected before and after the interviews for a better understanding of the studied organisations and the societal reality in Finland. The clippings were not as such used in the systematic analysis.

All the interviews were transcribed by research assistants employed by the University of Helsinki or the Helsinki University of Technology (in the City of Espoo case). Since the objective of the study concerned conceptualisation with mainly thematic or grammatical tools, the transcriptions were written at a basic level. Thus pauses in the transcriptions were marked with notes on length, laughter, unclear and colliding speech turns, interruptions of speech turns, and open-ended speech turns. In total, the empirical material of the study comprises 53 interviews, about 57 hours, and 905 pages of transcribed data (Table 2).

Table 2. The number of interviews in each studied organisation

	Number of interviews	Talk, hours	Text, pages
Espoo	16	20 hours	322
Tampere	19	19 hours 30 min.	335
FINNRA	14	13 hours 30 min.	191
Library	4	4 hours	57
Total	53	57 hours	905 pages

Evaluation of the interview process

An interview is always a sensitive situation in which the interviewer should be able to create a calm and trustful event of interaction resembling a relaxed conversation. Conducted interviews are not necessarily one-time situations; interviewees may later participate in group discussions, group interviews, development sessions and the like. Unpleasant or disrespectful experiences in the first encounter may have long-term effects on the process

and participants. In this study, an intervention was conducted in two organisations, but no lack of trust or tensions were registered during or after the interviews.

Following the interview guidelines, I tried to conduct the interviews in a pleasant, conversational style, aiming to be neutral and giving space to the interviewees. Prior to all the interviews I explained their purpose and how they would be used in the future, such as for development sessions, international conferences, or academic publications. I also asked if they had any questions about the project or the purpose of the interview before we started (see Kvale, 1996, p. 128). At the end of each interview I asked if there was something they wanted to add, something I did not understand to ask, or something otherwise important.

During the interview process I realised that providing time and space for further questions, especially prior to the interviews, was important. For instance, one of the interviewees wanted to know more about who in the organisation had authorised the project and the interviews. As we had agreed in the first meetings with the authorisers of the project, the organisation had the main responsibility for informing the staff about the project by following their own procedures. But researchers, in my opinion, have the final responsibility to clarify and explain anything that has remained unclear to the interviewees.

From the beginning of the research process I took ethical and moral issues very seriously into consideration. I emphasised that the interviewees would be anonymous in all public texts and presentations. I created a metadata document with comprehensive information of interviews and coded the interviews for later use. The codes have been used in publications and presentations to protect anonymity. When necessary, I have hidden background or organisational information to avoid the identification of persons. This has been essential considering internal or external power relations, for example, in cases when excerpts of interviews have been used as mirror data in interventions.

I felt that the information given prior to the interviews was sufficient to reassure the interviewees about the ethical issues. Also, my position in all the interviews was as an 'outsider', meaning that I had no position in the organisation and I did not take sides in anybody's favour. I saw myself as an information collector and hope that the interviewees considered my position in a similar way. Still, I understood the power relations and asymmetry between the interviewer and the interviewees. The interviewer is to some extent in a position of 'defining the situation' (Kvale, 1996, p. 126).

As indicated earlier, power relations do not exist only between interviewers and interviewees, but also vertically and hierarchically inside organisations. There can be difficult supervisor and employee relations or employee and customer relations calling for methods to leave interviewees unidentified in the texts. Thus, a number of sensitivity issues need to be considered when studying work contexts. As a result, without exaggeration, issues of confidentiality and anonymity were strictly respected in this study.

5.3. Organisation of the interview data

All interviews were coded from the beginning of the interview process following research ethical principles. The data was organised and analysed with a qualitative computer program ATLAS.ti 6. I prepared the data for the program by removing extra markings, such as identifications of speakers, time marks, and symbol codes. Second, I began reading the ATLAS.ti documents and removing utterances I found unessential, such as introductions, comments about the recorder being on, interviewees' families, or how to use the data. In the

first phase of the coding process I focused on interviewees' talk about customers in relation to the activity of the studied organisations. For instance, descriptions about earlier experiences in working life were not included in the analysis.

The unit of analysis was a thematic entity or quotation as it is called in ATLAS.ti language. The guiding principal in the first phase of analysis was a qualitative content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009) focusing on thematic contents of the data. The first coding phase of the study was conducted mainly within about 19 months between 2009 and 2011 and an additional coding concerning the City Centre Library data was conducted in the spring of 2012. The coding period was reasonably long and interpretations made at the beginning of the process may have varied from the last ones. This needs to be taken into consideration when evaluating the findings of the study.

The result of the coding process was 764 quotations about customers. The table below (Table 3) presents the distribution of interviews and quotations for customers.

Table 3. Number of interviews and quotations about customers

	Number of interviews	Number of quotations
Espoo	16	409
Tampere	19	240
FINNRA	14	75
Library	4	40
Total	53	764

In the second phase of the coding process I focused on the coded customer quotations. The process followed the principles of Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory in the sense that the codes for customer quotations were created during the analysis without theoretical concepts (Charmaz, 2001, p. 341). My leading questions were:

- What is the problem, concerning customers, in each studied organisation?
- Why is it important and relevant to study the customer concept in each organisation?
- What are the most interesting aspects in each research site? What are the differences?

I approached the questions by searching for the 'core' of each quotation. For instance, I interpreted the 'core' of the following excerpt of a quotation as an expanded customer:

And we do the work so that we take the relatives along immediately, to the evaluation process, to hear what they think. And we ask what the customer possibly thinks of the co-operation and what the customer's goals for co-operation are.

The final categories are presented in Appendix five. Three customer categories occurred in all the four studied organisations: *customer as a core of work*, *expanded customer*, and *customer as an evaluator*. I proceeded by further analysing these three categories. Table 4 presents the categories and the number of occurrences.

Table 4. Table of codes for customers and the number of quotations connected to each organisation

	Espoo	Tampere	FINNRA	Library	Total
Customer as a core of work	51	34	46	19	150
Expanded customer	53	33	4	16	106
Customer as an evaluator	10	11	17	2	40
Total	114	78	67	37	296

The analysis was not a linear process, but while reading and coding the data I reflected on the table in Appendix five in order to see whether my interpretations were still consistent with the original ones. I merged some of the categories with others a number of times. For instance, categories of fragmented customer and customers needing more care were merged with the category of expanded customer. Also, the category of road user customer was merged with the category of customer as a core of work.

I have described the process of organising the extensive data and conducting the preliminary analysis in order to move toward a deeper elaboration of the concept of customer from the perspective of employees. Notable here is that all the interviewees in this study are referred to as employees regardless of their position in service provision. Thus, employees here mean ‘interviewed employees and other participants in service provision’.

The preliminary analysis provided me a framework, which helped in examining more closely how employees understood and talked about their customers. In the following, I introduce the intermediate conceptual dimensions which I used to further explore the concept of customer. The empirical analyses are presented in Chapters six, seven, eight, and nine. The intermediate conceptual dimensions are presented in more depth at the beginning of each empirical chapter reporting on the interview analyses.

5.4. The intermediate conceptual dimensions

Intermediate conceptual tools are necessary in data analysis in order to make connections or fill the gap between theoretical concepts and empirical data (Engeström, 1999a, p. 177; see Vainio, 2012, p. 74). In this case the connection between the concept of customer as an object of activity and the collected data needed to be created. In the search for such a connection I read the pre-analysed data a number of times in parallel with reflecting on the notion of object. I identified the following intermediate conceptual dimensions which I considered adequate for further analysis:

- abstract, concrete, and between abstract and concrete (Berkenkotter & Ravotas, 1997; Engeström, 2007a; Sannino, 2010)
- active and passive (Pirkkalainen, 2003)
- social and temporal expansion (Hasu, 2000; Engeström, Puonti, & Seppänen, 2003)

These intermediate conceptual dimensions were used to construct analytical tools for each empirical analysis. In the following, I first introduce the intermediate conceptual dimensions, and then briefly construct the analytical tools. I introduce the specifics of the analytical tools in each empirical chapter (seven, eight, and nine). The studies of Berkenkotter and Ravotas (1997), Engeström (2007a) and Sannino (2010) provided the frame for analysing expressions of the customer as an object of work. Berkenkotter and Ravotas used conceptions of emic, contextual talk, and etic, decontextual categorisation, in their analysis revealing conflicts between therapists' and their clients' voices in health care. Engeström studied the construction of patients in the health care context with the concepts of stabilisation and possibility knowledge. Sannino analysed abstract notions of pupils and the movement toward a contextual and concrete conceptualisation of pupils in the school context. In my study I use these resources to reveal the stabilisation, dynamics, and possibilities of customer discourse. In the analysis I focus on both thematic expressions of customers and linguistic cues, such as narrative style of talk and categorisation.

According to Pirkkalainen (2003) the intermediate conceptual dimensions of active and passive Pirkkalainen (2003) refer to linguistic construction of agents in organisational settings. In her study Pirkkalainen analysed curriculum brochures in two private banks by focusing on active and passive verbs in the construction of customers. Active customer discourse, expressed, for instance, by 'we' refers to known agents who are part of an organisation. Passive customer discourse refers to anonymous agents having a mechanistic relationship with organisations, with an emphasis on needs and the perspective of the organisations. In this study I analyse spoken language and how customers as evaluators are conveyed in discourse. I focus on linguistic cues expressing active or passive agents, but also on thematic expressions of customers.

The intermediate conceptual dimensions of social and temporal expansion are used in the study to analyse discursively expressed expansion of customers. Hasu (2000) studied the implementation process of a technical device by analysing individual and collective expansion. Engeström, Puonti, and Seppänen (2003) analysed expansion of objects in three different fields of work by focusing on socio-spatial and temporal expansion. In this study I use the intermediate conceptual dimensions of social and temporal expansion to analyse changes in the object of work, customers¹⁰.

Analytical tools

The intermediate conceptual dimensions of abstract, concrete, and between abstract and concrete were used to establish an analytical tool to analyse how the object of work appeared in the interviews. The intermediate conceptual dimension of abstract refers to stabilising discourse, which is a classification style, decontextualized, minimally temporal, emphasises organisational focus, and does not indicate possibilities for organisational and customer focus to meet. The intermediate dimension of concrete refers to dynamic discourse, which

¹⁰ Analysing forms of interprofessional working and learning in spatially and temporally distributed teams see e.g. Guile (2011).

is a narrative style, temporal, and contextual, and emphasises customer focus. The intermediate conceptual dimension of between abstract and concrete refers to possibility discourse, revealing a conflicting sphere in which organisational and customer focus have opportunities to meet. Conflicts indicate possibilities for different perspectives to create something new in the future.

The intermediate conceptual dimensions of active and passive provided a framework for the analytical tool to analyse construction of customers as active and passive evaluators in organisational processes. The tool is comprised of cues to identify the discursive construction of customers. In the tool, the cues to reveal active customer discourse are expressed by an active verb implicating that it is clear who is acting, agents are named or known in the discourse, and customers are described being part organisations. Passive customer discourse is revealed by cues such as passive verb, unclearness of who is acting, implicit agent, classification style of discourse, anonymous agent, and descriptions of customers as outside of organisations.

The intermediate conceptual dimensions of social and temporal expansion are utilised to identify expansion in the object, in this study the object of activity. The analytical tool created for the analysis consisted of cues with which to analyse how interviewees expressed expansion of their customers. The cues to identify social expansion concerned the participation of multiple individuals or an organisation representing multiple voices, varied needs of customers, and multiple possibilities for influencing and participating in service production. The cues for identifying temporal expansion were comprised of identifying temporal tendencies with multiple individuals or organisations, temporal tendencies with varied needs of customers, and temporal tendencies with multiple possibilities for influencing and participating in service production.

5.

5. Historical documents

The interviews provided the main data for this study. However, historical documents (42) over a time span of three decades in each organisation were collected to supplement the interview data. The criteria for data selection were the initiation of the project and time of the interviews in 2000-2010. The previous years were selected to represent two decades prior to the conducted interviews. The following is a list of the analysed documents in each organisation.

The City of Espoo Annual Reports:

- 1983, 1984, and 1985¹¹
- 1993, 1994, and 1995
- 2003, 2004, and 2005

¹¹ The Social Services' annual reports from 1983 and 1984 and the Health Services' annual reports from 1984 and 1985 were those available in the archives of the City of Espoo during the data collection.

The City of Tampere documents:

- City of Tampere Social Committee annual reports from 1984 -1986
- City of Tampere Social and Health Services annual reports from 1994 – 1996 and 2004
- Care and Education Services guidelines 1 January 2005
- Care and Education Board and Committee guidelines 1 January 2005
- Regional annual plans 4 November 2005 (4 reports) for 2006
- Basics of evaluation in care and education in the City of Tampere 2006

The reason the 2005 and 2006 annual reports were not included in the analysis is that they were not available in the archives of the City of Tampere during the time of the analysis. Thus, I chose to complement the analysis with other collected documents from the missing years 2005 and 2006¹².

The Finnish Road Administration documents:

- The National Roads and Waterways Administration annual reports from 1988 and 1989
- The Finnish Road Administration annual reports from 1998, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005.

The Helsinki University Library documents:

- The Faculty of Law Library Annual Reports 1986, 1987, 1996, and 1997
- The Faculty of History and Philology Annual Reports 1989 and 1990
- The Undergraduate Library Annual Reports 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2004
- The Library and Information Services Annual Reports 2008 – 2011

For the data collection, I visited the archives of the City of Espoo, the City of Tampere, and the Helsinki University Library. The documents of the Finnish Road Administration were available in the library of the Finnish Transportation agency. I read through the documents and made notes. I also took pictures of some of the documents which I considered important and might want to return to later in the analysis process.

The method of analysis resembled thematic content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009) and the objective was, first, to follow the use of the word customer or the idea of customers historically. Second, the aim was to reflect on the findings on the interview analysis. In reporting on the findings, I reflected not only on the interview analysis but also on a historical review of the development of the four fields of work (Chapter four) and the principles of the New Public Management (Chapter one).

¹² I want to give special thanks to Liisa Asp, the Archive Secretary from the Welfare Services Archives in the City of Tampere. I appreciate her helpfulness, patience, and long-term determination in assisting me to access and find the needed Annual Reports.

The leading questions in the historical analysis included the following: What kinds of changes and development are reported in the texts? How do customers appear in the texts? Are customers seen as the object of work? Are they reported to be individual or collective customers? How are customers understood as evaluators of services? How often and how is the word customer or client used?

Following the methodology of cultural-historical activity theory, the structure and reporting of the findings do not necessarily follow the temporal order of the analysis (Collins, 2008, pp. 248-249). In this study, the interview analysis was conducted prior to the historical analysis, but the latter is presented first in the report. Thus, in the next section, part III, I first present the findings of the historical analysis (Chapter six) and in Chapters seven, eight, and nine the interview analyses.

PART III: EMPIRICAL ANALYSES

The first and second parts (Part I and Part II) introduced the background, context, and the theoretical and methodological resources of the study. In the third part (Part III) I continue by presenting the empirical analyses of the collected data. The first empirical analysis is a historical analysis based on official reports. Chapter six presents the analysis which answers the first research question: *How has the concept of customer historically developed in four public sector organisations?* The official reports represent an abstract introduction of customers in the organisations.

The remaining analyses in Chapters seven, eight, and nine are analyses of interview data. The chapters explore employees' interpretations of the concept of customer and changes in the concept. Chapter seven responds to the second research question: *How is the concept of customer conveyed in the discourse of the public sector organisation employees?* Chapter eight responds to the third research question: *How are customers as evaluators of services conveyed in the discourse of public sector organisation employees?* Chapter nine responds to the fourth research question: *What possibilities of expansion of the concept of customer can be detected in the discourse of the public sector organisation employees?*

6. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CUSTOMERS IN THE FOUR FIELDS OF WORK

In the framework of cultural-historical activity theory, a historical analysis is essential in order to understand the development, transformation, and present state of the object of investigation. Thus, the historical analysis together with the interview data provided the framework for the conceptualisation of customers. The analysed data are mainly the organisations' annual reports (46) from three decades. Thus, the focus is on the decades when the New Public Management principles were increasingly introduced to the public sector in Finland, starting from the 1980s.

At the end of each analysis is a short summary and a table. The tables scrutinise the main characteristics of development in the studied fields of work in Finland (the review presented in Chapter four), and development of the concept of customer in each research site.

6.1. Customers in elderly care in the City of Espoo

1980s

As of the 1980s the New Public Management initiatives emphasising service orientation and customer focus began to take root in public sector practices in Finland. The analysed reports revealed, however, that neither the word nor concept of customer were emphasised in elderly care in the City of Espoo in the 1980s. The word customer appeared in social care in 1984 and in health care in 1985, but it was not systematically used. In documents in the field of social services the most commonly used phrase was an elderly person, whereas in health services it was a patient or an admission. The use of the word customer reflects the observation that in social work in Finland the concept of customer appeared in the discourse in the 1980s, but strengthened its position only in the 1990s (Poikela, 2010, p. 6). In the City of Espoo elderly care functioned under social services until 1993, but operated closely with the health services.

In the 1980s elderly care was a part of the Welfare Department along with four other fields of services: public welfare, services for abusers of intoxicants and vagrants, allowances for draftees' dependants, and convalescent allowances. Hence, elderly care did not seem to have a specific profile on its own, but was instead bunched together with a variety of services with no close connection to the special needs of elderly people.

The studied documents showed that development of elderly care activities received more attention in 1983. For instance, a study on services and care of elderly people was conducted and steps were taken to increase the number of institutions and homes. Such actions were initiated by nationwide estimations of the increase in number of elderly people in Finland.

Elderly people appeared in the documents as a group of people or individuals, with one exception which was related to expansion of customers: a park party that was arranged for elderly people and their relatives. The following year, elderly care and the need to develop it received more emphasis. In the introduction of the annual report of social services, for instance, a whole chapter was dedicated to care for the elderly: 'Attention to elderly care'. Also, a committee was formed to produce a development programme for elderly care for 1984 – 1988. The programme was based on a study exploring the living conditions, service needs, and mobility of citizens 65 years and older in the City of Espoo. The direction of

service production was to move towards lighter, home care style care instead of institutionalised care.

In 1984 the number of citizens over 65 years had increased by about 300 over the previous year. The change was not yet very extensive, but the number was estimated to increase. Elderly care activities were emphasised in the introduction of the annual report, but otherwise, compared to the previous year, 1983, there was no extensive space for elderly care. Instead, the activities related to elderly care were embedded in the fields of home help services and support services. An attempt to see elderly people and elderly care activities as a whole, however, could be identified. One report was on a project conducted with the objective to move toward better collaboration between the home help services and home nursing. The health services of elderly people were not widely identifiable in the documents, which supported the reported need to develop the collaboration of these services with social services.

In 1985, the development of boundary crossing work activities was highlighted, and was on the agenda of aims to develop health services. Further, one of the strategic aims of health care was the activation of elderly people and their possibilities of managing better and longer at home. This strategy reflected the new service ideology and individualistic values introduced to the social and the health sector in the 1980s and 1990s (Paasivaara, 2003, pp. 89-90; Mäkitalo, 2005, p. 138). A project to improve customer orientation was also initiated in 1985. In 1984, the use of the word customer was infrequent but beginning to appear in social services discourse. In health services documents the word was first appeared in 1985, but the terms patients and admissions were more frequently used.

1990s

The year 1993 was one of an extensive reorganisation in the City of Espoo. The Social and Health Services were combined to form a new, larger unit. The aim of the reorganisation was to increase multi-professional work activities and customer orientation with fewer economic resources. The new division of labour in the unit was claimed to make such development possible. For instance, home help service and home nursing were combined administratively and functionally to serve customers better. Also, health centre hospitals and homes for the elderly were combined into one unit.

In 1993, elderly care and its development was given central importance in the City of Espoo. According to the annual report, private service providers entered the discourse and practice, thus reflecting the general development in the public sector. Discourse on services was more frequent than it was during the previous decades. A critical point calling for development in elderly care seemed to be intermediate care modes (staggering services) and cooperation between health institutions and home care. One strategic aim of the City of Espoo was to enable elderly people to stay at home as long as possible instead of placing them in institutions. Authorities had also identified elderly people who increasingly needed demanding care at home. Hence, the theme was introduced as one of the main priorities in planning and developing better and more purposeful services for elderly people.

In the mid-1990s an elderly care development programme for 1995-2000 was published with the aim of meeting the challenges the City of Espoo faced in elderly care. In 1995 the aims for providing care increasingly at home were expressed in detail: 90 % of those over 75 years old should be given the opportunity to stay at home instead of being institutionalised. The target was implemented in 1995. One reported method of success was co-operation with residents' associations and volunteers. Also, in 1995 the home care unit

had a fewer number of customers but more visits to their customers than in previous years. This change was due to emphasis on customers who needed demanding care, which led customers in need of lighter care to increasingly use private services.

2000s

The next restructuring of the Social and Health Services in the City of Espoo was conducted in 2004. The earlier five separate social and health service units were combined into one unit. In the new organisation the elderly care unit consisted of five home care service centres managed by a home care manager. Health care and rehabilitation as well as long-term care service centres formed their own units.

In 2003 one of the main focuses reported in the City of Espoo was to increase customer orientation. There were many similarities with the city's strategies a decade earlier: the aim was that 92 % of citizens over 75 years old should be provided with the opportunity to stay at home as long as possible and that those needing demanding care should be prioritised. A decrease in number of customers, but increase in number of visits was also reported.

The city's strategies in regard to elderly care were supported by implementing new principles for accepting new customers (Principles for accepting home care customers in the City of Espoo, 22 May 2003). The guidelines implied that the starting point for their services was facilitating customers to manage at home in as self-directed way as possible. This was to be realised, for instance, by strengthening family networks. Customers who were in a good condition should be advised to use other service providers (ibid, Appendix 5 B). The principles supported the idea that relatives and family members ought to be involved as care supporters in care activities. Also, care and service plans were to be approved and evaluated by customers or their relatives (ibid, Appendix A).

In 2004 the main emphasis on customers and their next of kin was expressed in relation to an informal care allowance (in Finnish: omaishoidontuki). Customers and their relatives were given a more active position in evaluation practices. Generally, in the 2000s evaluation practices and customer satisfaction became a more integral part of the discourse and activity. As expressed in the principles for accepting home care customers in the City of Espoo (City of Espoo, 2003), customers' experiences were to be followed and documented regularly by using customer inquiries. As an example, the reports showed that a vast number of customers were satisfied with their services in 2004 and 2005 despite the reduced resources for elderly care.

Technology as a tool for evaluation and work management received more attention in the 2000s than in the earlier decades. For example, the Effica IT-system was implemented and a JuurEs project was conducted to develop technology-based services for the elderly. In 2005, the RAI-system was implemented in elderly care. The RAI-system (Resident Assistant Instrument) is an international system for assessing and following the needs, quality, and costs of elderly care. Implementation of various assessment tools and systems, as opponents argue, reflect the New Public Management ideology and support the idea that social and health care customers can be easily categorised and ranked for administrative purposes (Julkunen, 2007, p. 166). Whatever the function of the systems was, it seemed to be evident that customers became increasingly objects of systematic evaluation and at the same time evaluators of their services.

In the 2000s, a new conception, boundary-crossing projects appeared in the documents for the first time. Such projects involved professionals from different sectors and organisations developing practices in a multidimensional way. One example of such a project was the IKÄ project, which was conducted to develop customer-oriented services. The word customer was frequently identified in the studied documents, and it often replaced the term elderly people.

Summary

In the 1980s, on the one hand, elderly care did not seem to have a specific profile as it was bunched together with a variety of services that had no close connection to the special needs of elderly people. The historical review, however, showed that separating elderly people from the poor and disabled already began in the 1940s and 1950s in Finland. On the other hand, reports such as the one in 1983 showed that elderly care had begun to receive more attention. A study related to the service provision and care of elderly people was conducted and steps were taken to increase the number of care homes. This was initiated by the nationwide estimations that the number of elderly people was growing. A project to improve customer orientation was also initiated in 1985. Elderly people were increasingly understood as individuals who needed to be activated in order to manage living at home.

In the 1990s, a reorganisation in health and social services was conducted in order to increase customer orientation and multi-professional work activities. It was also reported that private service providers had begun to participate in elderly care provision activities. The recession in Finland encouraged the public sector to investigate and implement new ways of providing services, in this case by following business models in service provision. Further, the city had a strategic aim of enabling elderly people to stay at home as long as possible instead of being taken care of in institutions. One reported method to enable such an aim was co-operation with residents' associations and volunteers.

In the 2000s, customer orientation as well as the use of the word customer in the discourse was more evident than in previous decades. Also, managing at home in a self-directed way with the help of family networks was more emphasised than earlier. Customers who were in good condition were advised to use other service providers. One of the most evident new characteristics was the increase in evaluation and feedback practices from customers and of customers. Customers were expected to be more active in a variety of areas in their lives.

Table 5 .Summary of development of elderly care in Finland and the concept of customer in the City of Espoo

	Elderly Care in Finland	Elderly Care in the City of Espoo
I	Integrated and isolated elderly people	
Before the 1930s	<p>Movement between elderly who were integrated members of the society and families and those who did not have providers or were isolated</p> <p>Tools: social policy acts to encourage families and employees to take care of elderly people by supporting home care</p>	
II	<p>From faceless mass towards persons with needs</p> <p>Trend towards expanded policy for systematic elderly care and recognition of elderly people's special needs. Tools implemented to support institutional care, but aims were towards home care</p> <p>Tools: legislation removing duties from children and family members</p>	
1930	<p>Elderly care became part of public service system</p> <p>Tools: poor relief laws</p>	
1940 War years	Elderly people's needs were recognised and care was separated from care of poor and disabled	
1950 Post-war society building	Elderly people's needs were recognised and care was separated from care of poor and disabled	
1960	<p>Strategies emphasising elderly people with their own needs</p> <p>Homes for the elderly with individual rooms</p> <p>Tools: political atmosphere supporting daughters' right to live elsewhere than their parents in order to work</p>	
1970	<p>Trend towards increased home care and sheltered homes</p> <p>Families were less able to take care of elderly people due to paid work duties.</p> <p>Tools: A new law was implemented removing duties from children to take care of their parents</p>	
III	<p>Active, influential, independent, and collective customers in service systems</p> <p>Movement between increased customer orientation and diminishing financial resources in providing quality services</p>	
1980 NPM entered the public sector in Finland	<p>Well-being instead of housing became object of elderly care</p> <p>Customer orientation entered the discourse</p> <p>Humanistic and individualistic values and service ideology</p> <p>Principles of self-determination and active agents</p> <p>Relatives were no longer passive observers</p> <p>Multiple caretakers entered the picture</p>	<p>Elderly care was organisationally bunched together with e.g. abusers of intoxicants and vagrants; nationwide elderly care was separated from care for the poor and disabled in 1940s and 1950s</p> <p>Increase in the number of institutions and homes, though the trend was towards home care</p> <p>Customer orientation, improvement of services, and activation of elderly people entered the discourse</p> <p>Elderly care received some emphasis, but the word customer was not regularly used</p>

1990 Severe recession in Finland	Service systems ideology combining sectors and units Recession reduced resources Increase in building modern sheltered houses and home care	The Social and Health Services were combined with the aim to provide better customer oriented services with fewer resources Elderly care and its development was one of the foci in the city Discourse of services was more frequent Growing emphasis on keeping elderly people at home as long as possible Elderly care development programme was implemented. Increase in multiple caretakers
2000	Customer orientation principles became more visible Away from control centred work. Quality and evaluation took on a bigger role in the discourse and activity Individual customers were expanded to include families	Reorganisation by combining separate social and health units Customer orientation was one of the main foci. Customers and their relatives were understood increasingly as customers Customer satisfaction and evaluation entered the discourse; customers were expected to be more active. Boundary crossing projects appeared Customers were more visible than in earlier decades

6.2. Customers in day care in the City of Tampere

1980s

In the 1980s the City of Tampere Social Committee's annual reports covered five areas of city activities: the Welfare Department, the Child Welfare Department, the Family Department, Children's Day Care and Institutions, and the Financial Department.

The annual reports from the 1980s were rather compact and the sections on day care were short and repetitive year after year. The term customer was not used in the day care reporting, but it was in the field of child welfare. Customers and customer families were mentioned, for example, in the chapter on child welfare customer work. In the day care section the reporting focused on the number of children in day care, visits by doctors, nurses, and day care inspectors, and on the utilisation rates of the day care places.

1990s

The administrative reorganisation of the social and health services in 1993, and the operational one in 1994 resulted in a new organisation. This also resulted in a change in the format of the annual reports of the City of Tampere Social and Health Services organisation.

Unlike reports in the previous decade every report began by clarifying the mission and strategy of the policies. In 1993 and 1994 the strategy was the aim to develop co-operation internally by forming multi-professional teams. Externally the aim was to develop co-operation with the private sector and volunteer groups by applying the purchaser-provider split in the City of Tampere. In 1994 extensive reports were made on the preconditions of the planned purchaser-provider split, and the productisation of services was continued.

Customers and quality were brought into the discourse, but the term customer was used more frequently in reports on social service than in health care reporting. Nor was it used in

the day care reports. In 1995 one of the reported basic values of social and health services was respect for human beings and life, which included self-determination and self-fulfilment, and the significance of and connection between freedom and responsibilities. Also, the individuality of day care children had become one of the focuses in day care.

In 1996, the last year analysed, customer focus was seen as an important aspect when arranging social and health services, but the steps for implementing the purchaser-provider split to enhance the customer approach, included in the 1994 and 1995 plans, were now missing.

Again, the day care section of the reports was limited in the 1990s. Children and parents were mentioned, but as separate entities rather than a unity. Service orientation had entered the discourse and was visible in the aims of providing day care services according to parents' and guardians' service needs. Further, customer inquiries as well as quality and quality improvement now received attention in reporting.

2000s

In 2004 the main focus in the city's strategy was supporting the growth of children and youths and cutting queues in the health care services. The purchaser-provider split had again appeared on the political agenda and 15 day care centres participated in planning implementation and pilot projects. Quality inquiries remained in the reports, and new discourses on production of services for customers and process thinking were introduced to day care. Day care managers were trained in process thinking in order to cope with changing work contexts. In day care, one of the leading principles was working together with children's parents, and supporting parents in raising their children. In addition, through participating in quality evaluation, the active role of parents was encouraged by involving them in quality evaluation. Parents were also increasingly able to communicate with day care centres through the Internet.

Generally, the idea of customer appeared more often in the document texts in the 2000s than they had in the 1980s, but the term customer was still not used very often. In the health care section the term was used more frequently than earlier, but it was often used together with the term patient (customer/patient, for instance).

The character of the guidelines in care and education activities in 2005 and 2006 were fairly formal, focusing on organisational aspects such as the division of labour. Developing services, customer focus, quality, assessments, and competitiveness were included in the guidelines. Customers as such did not receive much attention as active agents. However, one expressed aim in the committee guidelines was to improve the opportunities of residents to participate in and influence activities organised by the city.

The city published an extensive report on the basics of evaluation in care and education in 2006. The reports seemed to be a significant indication of a step towards implementation of quality control, management, and evaluation. Early education was described as a process children's development and learning by involving them as active actors. Quality management referred to a procedure in which children, parents, personnel, and administration together (educational partnership) evaluated and developed activities according to the aims agreed on. In addition to children's and parents' evaluations, the reports mentioned auditing practices being used to improve the quality of services (City of Tampere, 2006, pp. 21-23).

Perhaps due to the practical focus, the four regional annual plans for 2006 focused on customers more extensively than the other studied documents from the 2000s. All the reports had a similar structure, starting with the section: Developing customer-oriented services. The section included listening to customers and their needs, communicating at team level to identify service needs, also under customers' changing circumstances, encouraging families to participate in planning, developing, and evaluating services, investing in evaluation practices and communication, and serving customers equally and flexibly. The texts frequently mentioned customer satisfaction inquiries, customer feedback, and continual development, as well as educational partnership.

Summary

In the 1980s the documents analysed regarded customers as the number of day care places. Interesting from the point of view of this study was that the reports showed the first plans for the later implemented purchaser-provider split. In the next decade the customer was more visible in the day care reports. More attention was given to the individuality of day care children, and children and parents were seen as separate entities rather than a unity. Service orientation, parents' and guardians' needs, quality, and customer inquiries appeared in the discourse.

In the 2000s the purchaser-provider split appeared again on the political agenda, and 15 day care centres participated in planning implementation of the pilots. New discourses, on production of services for customers and process thinking, customer focus, quality, assessments, residents' participation and competitiveness were introduced to day care.

Some of the leading principles of day care involved working together with children's parents, supporting parents in raising their children, and participating with parents in quality evaluation. The roles of parents and children as active actors were emphasised more often than earlier. The use of the term customer was infrequent, but educational partnership was mentioned in the documents.

Table 6. Summary of the development of day care in Finland and the concept of customer in the City of Tampere

	Day Care in Finland	Day Care in the City of Tampere
I	From "storing" infants to regarding children as objects of care innovations towards socially equal children and families 1800-1910	
Before 1880s	Social institutions, often in connection to factories where mothers worked No pedagogical aspects Child and infant "storage space"	
1880-1910	First kindergarten for poor children in Finland in 1888 Kindergartens supported social equality Both social and educational objectives Mainly part-time care Number of kindergartens in 1900s was 10	

II	Child protection and emphasis on supporting families socially 1920-1940	
1920s	Kindergartens functioned under the school administration until 1924 when transferred to social sector Objective of day care was more social than educational In Finland the need for day care was initiated partly by women's participation in paid work; elsewhere in Europe the objective was pedagogical The number of kindergartens was 100	
1930s	Law for child welfare as a step for organised day care in 1936 Law obliged municipalities to organise support for families in children's upbringing	
III	Phase of quiet war and post war time of day care development 1940-1960	
1940-1950 War/post war years	The war interrupted development and increase of day care centres Families still lived in agrarian environment	
IV	Phase of welfare state building and intensive development of day care for families 1960-1980	
1960s	Insufficient day care system became evident The number of kindergartens had increased to 350	
1970s	The law for children's day care was implemented in 1973. It combined social and educational aspects	
1980s	Quality discourse entered day care	The word customer was rarely used in day care reporting, only in child welfare The focus in reporting was on number of day care places, visits of doctors, nurses, and day care inspectors and also on the utilisation rates of the day care places
V	Towards educational partnership and active and participating customers 1990-	
1990s	Law of subjective right to day care was implemented in 1995 This was a step from adult centred towards child centred education in day care Educational aspects were emphasised Customers were families, not only working parents	Customers, customer focus, service orientation, customer inquiries and quality appeared in reports Customers' needs received attention Reported values of self-determination, self-fulfilment, freedom and responsibilities Children and their parents appeared as separate entities rather than a unity
2000s	Concept of Educare combining education and care giving was introduced Concept of educational partnership was introduced, considering personnel and parents equal Law for position and rights of social care customers was implemented in 2000. Customers were considered active and participating agents with their own rights and responsibilities Away from control centred work. Quality and evaluation entered increasingly into the discourse and activity Individual customers expanded to include families	New discourses on production of services for customers and process thinking appeared One of the leading principles was working together with children's parents and supporting parents in raising their children Active and participating role of parents was visible The concept of customer was more visible than earlier, although the word customer was rarely used

6.3. Customers in the Finnish Road Administration

1980s

In 1988 The National Roads and Waterways Administration went through a reorganisation, transferring more responsibilities to road districts and road supervisors. The new organisation was a result of a developmental policy of moving from management by objectives towards management by results. For the first time in 1988 the organisation was able to pay bonuses to employees following management by results objectives (National Roads and Waterways annual report, 1988, p. 31).

In the annual report of 1988 customers as such did not receive much attention. The reported topics included the amount of traffic, cars and vehicles, road networks, and accidents. The figures, of course, included road users as customers, but the emphasis seemed to be on roads. One sentence, however, expressed in bold in the text emphasised the position of customers: 'The National Roads and Waterways Administration serves society by offering well-functioning and safe moving possibilities for changing needs of different customer groups' (National Roads and Waterways annual report 1988, p. 6). Also, customer orientation was mentioned when reporting on managers' training courses in management by results objectives (*ibid.*, p. 31).

The following year, 1989, saw preparation for a large change in the organisation, 'a year of versatile work and development, a real renovation' (National Roads and Waterways annual report, 1989, p. 55). In 1990, waterway management was transferred to the Finnish Maritime Administration along with the organisation's 'original stuff', water (*ibid.*). Now the organisation became the Finnish National Road Administration (FINNRA), an organisation responsible for road maintenance only.

The annual report of 1989 seemed to follow a reporting style similar to the previous annual report. The customer was mentioned very little and the focus still seemed to be on roads. An increase in the amount of traffic was reported both years. At the same time the number of personnel had decreased by 3,400 persons since 1980 due to development in road keeping methods and the new organisation (National Roads and Waterways annual report, 1989, p. 31).

1990s

In this decade the Finnish National Road Administration faced new changes and challenges. In 1997 the Ministry of Transport and Communications suggested separating administration and production and opening up competition for road maintenance. The suggestion was not followed up; instead, a decision on internal separation was made in 1997 and realised in 1998.

The Finnish National Road Administration apparently followed the New Public Management procedures and at least adopted its discourse to some extent. The annual report of 1998 showed that concepts such as products and services were mentioned in the discourse. Also, the concept of customer played a larger role than ten years earlier, yet not as an active participant in service production. Employees were also trained to become more familiar with corporate style culture, which included seeing road-users as customers (Pekkala, 2009, p. 13).

The report had one whole chapter called 'Daily customer service and customer satisfaction' (Finnish National Road Administration annual report, 1988, pp. 12-15). Customer focus included, for instance, customer feedback concerning road maintenance. The feedback was reported to be of central importance in the organisation's activities. For

example, more training was arranged to improve the quality of services in areas where negative feedback was given. Such an area, for instance, was poorly organised traffic arrangements around construction sites.

The administration reported on a new concept initiated by the Ministry of Finance: the Service Commitment. The objective of the commitment was to define the relation between customers and The Finnish Road Administration. Also, road district services were described in language familiar to customers; for instance, a commitment concerning provided services was clearly stated in understandable language (Finnish National Road Administration annual report, 1998, p. 13).

In 1999 the Finnish National Road Administration finalised their customer strategy. The first of the reported tasks of the organisation was to increase customer orientation in their activities. According to their vision, they would function openly and in an interactive way, thus taking into consideration customer groups' needs (Finnish National Road Administration annual report, 1999, p. 6). Customers were also mentioned as co-participants in the planning of activities (ibid, p.10).

The vision and values of the Finnish National Road Administration emphasised customer orientation, with the Service Commitment reported as one tool to achieve it. The Service Commitment was to be used to analyse customer feedback and develop services according to this feedback. It was also meant to direct road districts in developing their work self critically. In 1999 over 2,000 customers were interviewed to collect feedback on the services (Finnish National Road Administration annual report, 1999, p. 11).

One example of the participation of customers was a competition called 'Tie paikallaan – katu kohdallaan', 'Road in place – street on the spot' arranged by The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Finnish Road Association and the Finnish National Road Administration. The objective of the competition was to locate a new or renovated road or street that blended into the natural environment. The winner was the Kurhila-Hillilä road, renovated by the Tavastia Road District. In this case, village inhabitants and the Village Committee participated actively in planning the improvement of the road (Finnish National Road Administration annual report, 1999, p. 17). Compared to the previous year's reporting, customers had become more visible and active.

2000s

In 2001 a long planned and prepared reorganisation of road maintenance was realised. The former Finnish National Road Administration had been split into a purchaser organisation, the Finnish Road Administration, and a provider organisation, the Finnish Road Enterprise. One of the main objectives of the split was to move 'towards a more customer-oriented way of working' by purchasing services from free markets and 'changing from an engineering office to a service and professional organisation' (Finnish Road Administration annual report, 2002, p. 6).

The values of the organisation emphasised customers and customer orientation. This was communicated in the annual report in the following way: 'Our customers' needs and satisfaction are the basis for our work. We function actively and in interaction with our customers and interest groups' (Finnish Road Administration Annual Report 2002, p. 3). One chapter in the report concerned road user inquiries as an important tool in developing services (ibid, p.17), and another chapter was titled 'Serving Road Users (ibid., p. 20). Customer focus discourse was apparent in the report. The Finnish Road Administration's customers were also defined and grouped into four groups: road users, customers needing

transportation services, customers needing information about services, and customers needing authority services (Finnish Road Administration annual report, 2002, p. 3; Finnish Road Administration, 2003a).

The reporting in the Finnish Road Administration documents in 2003 and 2004 was similar to the previous year's reporting in regard to customer approach. Customer orientation and customers were mentioned in connection with the organisation's values and vision, and clientele was incorporated in the organisation chart together with the planning of services, purchasing services, and traffic services. The Customer Strategy 2003 supported promotion of customer orientation as well as the realisation of the organisation's values, vision, and mission. A new research and development programme for 2002-2007 prioritised, for instance, the needs of customer groups as a basis for developing services. Further, customer orientation was included in the evaluation of the profitability of the organisation. Customer orientation was operationalised as customer satisfaction based on collected feedback and a systemic approach to handling customer relationships (Finnish Road Administration annual report, 2003; Finnish Road Administration annual report, 2004). In the 2005 report, the title customer orientation was replaced by road user satisfaction.

Occasionally, customers were introduced as active agents in the documents: (...) 'how customers consider the Finnish Road Administration activity and road maintenance services' (Finnish Road Administration annual report 2003, p. 31). The Finnish Road Administration had invested resources to drive their organisation towards a customer-oriented one. Customer strategy 2002 and operating strategy 2005 were updated in 2006 with a guideline and a development programme in customer relationship management. The objective of the updates was to assist in further improving customer relationships based on collected experiences and identified learning actions (Finnish Road Administration, 2006, p. 9). In the programme, customer groups were enriched and grouped in a new way. Customers were now citizens, economic life, and agents protecting basic activities in the society (e.g. police), showing that previous product-oriented segments were now defined by customer-oriented (ibid., p. 11). The Finnish Road Administration showed self-reflection in the programme, emphasising that they had understood the salience of customers and that they were willing to serve customers well, but that they were still lacking a deep understanding of the customer relationship. The organisation culture, which emphasised knowledge, had ignored the development of customer relationships to a certain extent (ibid., p. 12). The new programme was created to face the new challenges and define the meaning of customer orientation in the Finnish Road Administration. The organisation had acknowledged the growth in customers' demands, power, and possibilities of influencing services, which had contributed to the planning of future service production.

Summary

In the late 1980s customers as such did not receive much attention in reporting. The object of work seemed to be roads, traffic, cars, road networks, and accidents. References to customer orientation were noted, although the word customer did not appear in the texts as such. In the late 1990s the concept of customer was more easily identifiable in the reports than ten years earlier. For instance, employees were trained to become more familiar with corporate style culture, which included seeing road-users as customers. In the annual report of 1998 one whole chapter was dedicated to customer service and customer satisfaction, and in 1999 the customer strategy was finalised. Also, customers were mentioned as being able to participate in the planning of activities.

In 2000 customer focus increased. In 2001 the organisation was split to the Finnish Road Administration purchasing services and the Finnish Road Enterprise providing services. One of the main objectives was to move 'toward a more customer-oriented way of working' by purchasing services from free markets. Customer needs and satisfaction were reported to be a basis for work activities. Customer orientation was included in the evaluation of the profitability of the organisation and occasionally customers were expressed as having an active role in the organisation's activity. The Finnish Road Administration showed self-reflection by admitting that the organisation was still lacking a profound understanding of their customer relations.

Table 7. Summary of the development of road building, maintenance and management in Finland and the concept of customer in the Finnish Road Administration

	Road building, maintenance, and management in Finland
I	From managing waterways to managing roads
1700	The Royal Finnish Committee for the Cleaning of Rapids was established in 1799 The object of work was cleaning and maintaining waterways instead of roads. Road building and maintenance were not systematically organised; landowners had the responsibility
1800	The Road and Waterway Transport Board was established in 1860 along with industrialisation Responsibilities covered roads, rails, canals, ports, and telegraph lines
1900	Ca. 2,000 km of roads had been built; they were increasingly in heavy use Road management was partly outsourced Rural police chiefs were responsible for small rural roads. Problems with quality emerged
1920	Nationalisation of road management in 1921: The National Board of Road and Water Works, later known as The National Board of Public Roads and Waterways, was established
1940 War years	The war interrupted the growth of road building and ruined the existing transportation networks
1950 Post-war years	Building activities increased, providing work for vast numbers of unemployed Loans from the World Bank contributed extensively to the society, including road building
II	Intensive development towards a customer-oriented organisation
1980 NPM entered the public sector in Finland	The National Roads and Waterways Administration went through a transformation, providing more responsibilities to road districts and road supervisors in 1988 Development of the policy towards management by results First bonuses for employees in 1988 Customers as such did not receive much attention; instead information on traffic, cars and vehicles, road network, and accidents was reported
1990 Severe recession in Finland	In 1997 the Ministry of Transport and Communications suggested separating administration and production and opening competition for road keeping In 1998 internal separation was realized and the Finnish National Road Administration was established; object of work was road keeping Concepts such as products, quality, and services appeared in the discourse Concept of customer was more visible than earlier Employees' training for corporate style culture included understanding road-users as customers A Service Commitment was introduced. The objective was to define the relation between customers and the organisation Road district services were described with language familiar to customers The customer strategy was finalised in 1999. Customer orientation was reported to guide activities Participatory customers were mentioned Customer feedback was used to develop services Self-criticism was mentioned
2000	In 2001 split into purchaser and provider organisations. One aim was a more customer-oriented way of working Free markets were mentioned Customers appeared in the text regularly Customer orientation was included in evaluation of the profitability of the organisation; operationalized as customers' satisfaction based on the collected feedback Guideline and development programme in customer relationship management were implemented in order to develop customer relationship based on collected experiences and learning Values of the organisation emphasised customers and customer orientation Product-oriented segments were replaced with customer-oriented segments Customers were citizens, economic life, and agents protecting basic activities in the society (e.g. police)

6.4. Customers in the Helsinki University Library

1980s and 1990s

In the 1980s and 1990s the Helsinki University library followed the trend identified three decades earlier: a new generation with new and fresh ideas for managing and developing library services was beginning to take managerial positions (Mäkinen, 1989, pp. 37-38). Also, management by results, resource cuts caused by the regression, reallocation of resources, internal evaluation, and strategic change proposals were evident during the period (Sinikara, 2010, p. 22).

The historical analysis in my study revealed that during both decades, diminishing resources such as lack of facilities and staff received a substantial amount of attention in the texts (Faculty of History and Philology Library Annual Reports 1989 and 1990). One aspect supporting customer orientation was the aim to develop services according to changing environments and, especially, the needs of universities. The library recognised new methods of teaching in higher education, such as increasing multi-form teaching. The new methods created demands for new kinds of study materials and devices as well as space for group work (Helsinki University Library. Student Committee, 19.5.1995).

The studied university library documents revealed that in the 1980s customers appeared in the discourse as rather passive and abstract, often in the form of the number of visits in reading rooms, number of borrowings, number of persons in journal circulation, and customers' use of library space per hour (Faculty of Law Annual Report 1986 and 1987; Undergraduate Student Library Advisory Board minutes, 1980s).

Towards the end of the 1990s quality of services, developing services as well customer and user inquiries received attention in the library documents. Goals such as serving library users the best possible way, raising the service and quality levels, and increasing customer satisfaction were implemented in the library policy (Faculty of History and Philology Annual Report, 1990; Helsinki University Library Strategy, 1995; The Undergraduate Library Annual Report, 1997). Customer satisfaction was operationalised as high service rates, minimum delays in services, collections in good order, and a guiding system supporting self-directed library use (Helsinki University Library Strategy, 1995). Some of the most extensive actions identified were user inquiries conducted by the Undergraduate Library. The results were utilised in negotiations with other libraries concerning division of work and quality of services (The Undergraduate Library Annual Report, 1999). Yet, customers were not expressed as active agents and the word customer was rarely used. The overall impression was that in the 1980s and 1990s various statistics were more important than 'real' customers.

The University of Helsinki undertook actions for assessment and development of higher education as well as library activities. One aim was to take into account users and their needs. Two problems regarding the library organisation were noted: the library did not have a unified administration and was considered as a support organisation for teaching and research rather than a central resource for universities. Later, to overcome the problem, the library organisation became part of the strategic development of the university, which made a more profound profiling of library work possible (Kuusi, 2011, pp. 341 and 432). The University Library became an independent institution within the University of Helsinki in 1997.

2000s and 2010s

In accordance with the general development in the public sector in Finland, developing customer service became one of the main objectives of the Helsinki University library in the 2000s. Annual customer satisfaction inquiries were conducted and the internet pages provided opportunities for customer feedback on services (Kuusi, 2011, p. 428). This finding resembles the findings in the historical analysis in this study (Chapter four) and reveals that customers and customer-orientation had increasingly taken root in library discourse in the 2000s.

One whole chapter was dedicated to customer focused guidance and self-service in the library in the Annual Report 2004. The chapter reported on service development aimed, for example, at individual services and IT-based services. Also, use of customer feedback to develop know-how and uniform quality of guidance services was addressed in the Annual Report 2004 report (Kuusi 2011, pp. 6-7, see also The Library and Information Services Annual Report, 2004, p. 9). Further, the strategy for s 2007-2009 included in the library's core tasks: easily accessible good quality services that meet customers' needs, information literacy (IL) teaching, capable personnel realising needed services, and quality assurance (The Undergraduate Library's Annual Report, 2004, p. 3). Library material had increasingly been transferred to web-based services calling for new digital products, but personal customer service was still highlighted in daily library work. Also, a feedback system had been developed to serve customers better and respond to their needs (The Library and Information Services Annual Report, 2004, p. 9).

One of the core activities of academic libraries had been the development of archive systems for academic publications as well as their distribution on the Internet. In 2008 the library took steps towards new objectives: responding to researchers' needs by managing an increasingly larger amount of publications, research data and material. This objective accorded with the University of Helsinki's strategy for 2007-2009, which included the strategic goal of emphasising research activities and postgraduate education (The Library and Information Services Annual Report, 2008, pp. 15-16).

In the 2000s several changes took place in the library organisation, both larger structural ones and those affecting daily work activities. In 2006 the library organisation was reorganised and a new institute of the University of Helsinki was established. Further, in 2009 a decision was made to separate the Helsinki University Library from the university and to establish an independent institution from the beginning of 2010.

Profiling of customers as well as their active role in libraries became more apparent in the documents towards the end of the 2000s. There were also signs of such changes in practice. For instance, in 2009 *Knotworking in the Library* project, which provides data for this thesis, was conducted in the Viikki and the City Centre Campus Libraries with the objective of developing services for research groups. On the Kumpula Campus the library had arranged meetings with researchers for years and they were reported to continue in 2009. The Meilahti Campus Library Terkko had been active in innovating service tools in order to facilitate services such as filtering of new research results and publications (The Library and Information Services Annual Report 2009). Signs of active roles of customers continued in the later studied annual reports 2010 and 2011. As an example, the library reported on the Service Design Project, which aimed to cooperate with customers to develop coherent and user-oriented services.

Summary

In the 1980s and 1990s customers did not receive substantial attention in the library documents. Customer orientation was identified, but statistical information such as visits to the reading room, number of borrowings, number of persons in journal circulation, and customers' use of library space per hour received more emphasis.

Also, customer satisfaction was operationalised, partly quantitatively and partly qualitatively: high service rates, minimum delays in services, collections in good order, and a guiding system supporting self-directed library use.

The concept of customers changed and their position became more identifiable and active in the 2000s. For instance, whole chapters in some of the analysed annual reports were devoted to serving customers, customer feedback systems were developed, and projects aiming at better customer services were conducted. Customers' needs were also included in the aims of the library strategy. Customers as a term was conveyed in the texts more frequently than in the two previous decades.

Table 8. Summary of the development of academic libraries in Finland and the concept of customer at the Helsinki University Library

	Academic Libraries in Finland	The Helsinki University Library
I	Early years of academic libraries	
1640-1917	The first academic library was established in Turku; earlier there were book collections in churches or monasteries During the period of autonomy under Russia, libraries were small and connected to various scholarly societies	
1917-1940	Number of universities and higher education institutions increased and libraries were established, though the First World War delayed the development Customers were internal: students, teachers, and researchers	
II	First period of transformation after the war	
1940 War years	Resources were scarce and development of academic libraries slow Taylorism and scientific management models were introduced Course books language changed from German to English. ASLA-grants from US Libraries became more open and international Librarians became 'servants instead of conservators'	During the Second World War the library functioned in a limited way. The university library provided support for studies and sent material to the front.
1950 Post-war society building	Decade of construction and development with new physical resources Marketing of services started The main customers were students, teachers, and researchers The term customer was used	The Library of the Student Union of the University of Helsinki was established in 1958.
III	Second period of transformation and construction from 1960s onwards	
1960	Active period of development. New generation in managerial positions Need to develop ways to increase and acquire information; for instance, demands for marketing Number of academic publications increased enormously; demand for managing them	

	Demands to develop a shared service system with co-operators to satisfy customers' needs Number of universities increased System of course books was reorganised	
1970	Trends that began in 1960s continued Time of rationalisation and centralisation with ideology of growth Systematic plans for automatisisation of library work were initiated	The library adopted rationalisation Despite scarce resources the library developed their services and listened to customers
1980 NPM entered the public sector in Finland	Quiet decade Introduction of IT- based tools to the library world, but they were not widely used	A new generation began to take managerial positions Resources diminished Customers passive and invisible; number of visits to the reading room, borrowings, persons in journal circulation, and customers' use of library space per hour
III	Third period of transformation towards customer-oriented library in 1990s and 2000s	
1990 Severe recession in Finland	Expansion of information society called for new digital tools. Economic recession had extensive effects to libraries Financial resources decreased, hindering, for instance, book acquisition Growing unemployment encouraged more people to study, increasing the number of customers	Management by results, resource cuts due to recession, reallocation of resources, internal evaluation, and strategic change proposals were introduced Resources diminished Increasing multiform teaching, created demands for new study material, devices, and space for group work Quality of services, developing services as well as customer and user inquiries received some attention Customer satisfaction was operationalised as high service rates, minimum delays in services, collections in good order, and a guiding system supporting self-directed library use Customers did not appear as active agents and the word customer was rarely used; the emphasis was on statistics Aims to take into account users and their needs more extensively
2000 and 2010	In 2000s the trend of digitalisation continued worldwide Digital services as well as digital learning environments used in higher education developed quickly A new basic task for librarians: teaching information literacy New technologies created demands for librarians to master commercial, legal, and pedagogical knowledge Needs for constant learning to increase their expertise according to emerging demands New demands from customers in relation to research material and data	Customer service one of the main focuses and customer orientation had increasingly taken root in library discourse Annual customer satisfaction inquiries were conducted Strategies included core tasks, such as easily accessible good quality services that meet customers' needs, capable personnel realising needed services, and quality assurance Library material increasingly transferred to web-based services, but personal customer service was still highlighted in daily library work Objectives of managing larger amounts of publications and research material according to researchers' needs Development projects to innovate services with and for research groups were conducted In 2006 new institute of the University of Helsinki with nine units was established In 2010 the University Library was separated from the university and an independent institution was established

6.5. Conclusions

The findings of the study's historical analysis revealed that despite the different fields of work and diverse character of the studied organisations, introduction of the concept of customer and customer orientation began to receive attention at approximately the same time in all four organisations. In the 1980s customers appeared in documents mainly quantitatively as numbers connected with the number of visits or day care places or amount of traffic. They were expressed as abstract and decontextualized with minimal indications of them being understood as objects of work. Also, the word customer was used rarely in organisational documents, but there were initial signs of the customer approach. The Finnish Road Administration had, however, adopted the New Public Management approach earlier than the other organisations. Customer orientation and management by results as well as systematic aims toward a market-oriented service organisation are mentioned in the documents as early as the 1980s.

A change in customer approach as well as adoption of the New Public Management initiatives took place in the 1990s and continued to develop in the 2000s (and the 2010s in the case of the Helsinki University Library). It is notable that also the style of annual reports had changed in all organisations from a minimal reporting style toward a more content rich text including strategies and visions.

In the 1990s the City of Espoo conducted a major reorganisation with the aim of becoming a more customer-oriented organisation, and the City of Tampere emphasised customer focus in its activities. Further, in all organisations new terms, such as products, services, quality, and evaluations appeared in the discourse. The word customer, however, was still rarely used, except in the Finnish Road Administration documents. In the day care context it was not used at all in the 1990s. The City of Espoo recognised private service providers as one of their key partners for providing customer-oriented services, thus adopting the New Public Management ideology and the aims toward a market oriented-organisation.

In regard to understanding customers as the object of work, the City of Espoo recognised elderly care as one of the main focuses of activities in the 1990s, and implemented an elderly care development programme. Also, the Finnish Road Administration's customers were more identifiable in documents than in the previous decade. The conception of individuality appeared in the City of Tampere documents and the concept of participatory customers in the Finnish Road Administration documents in the 1990s. Customers and the understanding of customers as the object of work seemed to be least developed in the Helsinki University Library when compared with the other organisations.

In the 2000s the trend of increasing customer orientation and the use of the New Public Management tools continued. The word customer was used more systematically in all the organisations studied, even though the usage was not very frequent in the City of Tampere. The findings from the 2000s accord with Needham's (2006) study on public sector customers in England. She reported on the word customer being the most or second most used term in policy documents analysed from 2003 and 2004. Her study, however, did not follow the concept historically.

The Finnish Road Administration was reorganised and split into a purchaser and a provider organisation following the New Public Management ideology. In the City of

Tampere the implementation of the purchaser-provider split, which was rejected in the 1990s, returned to the agenda. Several tools, many of which were related to quality and service evaluations, were introduced to serve customers better and respond to their needs. The City of Espoo also introduced a new tool to elderly care, the principles for choosing customers. In the day care context a new concept appeared in the discourse. All these efforts, larger and smaller ones, were aimed towards becoming a customer-oriented organisation.

Because of the strong emphasis on evaluation processes customers were to a great extent understood as active agents in the discourse of the 2000s, but in the City of Tampere and the Finnish Road Administration in particular, customers were also recognised as participatory and influential. In the City of Espoo, there was an apparent expansion of the concept of customers into networks and multiple service providers.

The historical analysis did not reveal any major differences between the organisations in the introduction of the concept of customer and understanding customers as the object of work. Comparison as such might not even be a useful method in analysing the discursive expressions of the concept due to the different character of the documents and organisations. The contribution of the analysis was rather to reveal larger trends in the organisations in regard to the discursive appearance of the concept of customers in the reports.

CONCEPT OF CUSTOMER AT THE CORE OF WORK

7.1. Customer discourse

The New Public Management initiatives have had profound effects on the duties and responsibilities of civil servants, municipalities, and civic societies (Finska & Möttönen, 2005; Lave et al., 2010, p. 662; Lin, 2004). Hence, we are talking about a rather fundamental change across hierarchical and vertical dimensions in the public sector service production and in our society. These are worth elaborating. A variety of discourses with positive connotations are claimed to have influenced these changes (Fairclough, 2000). Emery and Giaque (2003) referred to the New Public Management discourses as ‘official discourses’, emphasising the potential for organisations to become innovative through greater participation of employees in organisational functions, which would result in greater efficiency, productivity, and quality of services. Gee, Hull, and Lankshear (1996) identified ‘fast capitalism texts’, discourses which are produced by business managers and consultants aiming to strengthen ‘the new work order’ and to create new social identities or new kinds of people. Such new people are new leaders, new workers, new students, new teachers, new citizens, new communities and even new ‘private’ people who are on the border between private life and working life. Thus, former bosses become coaches and leaders, former middle managers become team leaders, former workers become associates, partners and knowledge workers, and customers become partners and insiders (Gee et al., *ibid.*, p. xiii).

Eräsaari introduced the rhetoric of ‘an attractive story’, which has been utilised to support a number of the New Public Management implementations (Eräsaari (2006, pp. 4-7). What make discourses and stories ‘attractive’ are promises the New Public Management methods provide: promises to solve problems of bureaucracy by following business models, thus becoming more efficient, customer-oriented, and responsive to customers (*ibid.*; Koskiahio, 2008, p. 171). Other New Public Management discourses include discourses of customer, customer-orientation, quality, accountability, risk, productivity, ‘private being better than public’, ‘demanding consumers’ having more opportunities to choose the best services (Eräsaari, 2006; Grimshaw, Willmott, & Rubery, 2005), customer participation (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005), globalisation (Spicer & Fleming, 2007), and innovative organisational potential (Emery & Giaque, 2003).

7.2. Conceptual framework

In this chapter, I focus on the customer as a core of the work discourse, which was identified in the data representing interviewees’ talk about the object of their work. As already indicated, customer and customer orientation discourses have been used as an argumentation for new work models and work methods in public organisations. Earlier citizens, clients, service-users, and the public are now understood as customers. The rationale behind the discourse is that customers should increasingly be understood as the ‘real’ object of work rather than someone to be served impersonally or someone who comes to receive services without needs and wants. Recent studies in the area of cultural-historical activity theory and developmental work research have put central importance on the object of work in organisational settings (Engeström, 2001, p. 135). The notion of object directing human activity, introduced in Chapter three, which presents the theoretical framework, is one of the key concepts in analysing activity (Engeström, 1987; Leont’ev, 1978).

In this chapter I present an analysis of how customer discourse is manifested in employees' speech and how they conceptualise their customers as the object of work. The salience of such a topic is that by remaining on an abstract level and lacking realisation customer discourse as a strategic tool may hinder the improvement of service provision and other organisational processes (see Virkkunen & Ristimäki, 2012).

In the first phase of the empirical analysis, I identified a thematic customer as a core of the work discourse. In order to grasp the dynamic character of the concept of customer and move towards theoretical conceptualisation I needed to go beyond the descriptive reading and stabilising categorisation of the data (Berkenkotter & Ravotas, 1997; Engeström, 2007; Sannino, 2010). I proceeded by analysing the customer as a core of work in regard to how interviewees talked about their customers. The analysis was conducted by categorising the data with three intermediate conceptual dimensions: abstract, concrete, and between abstract and concrete. The abstract realisation of customers referred to formal and organisational discourse on customers where organisational priorities were emphasised. The concrete realisation of customers was contextual and the customers were understood as real persons. The between abstract and concrete realisation of customers represented a twofold or conflicting sphere with possibilities for the organisational and customer focus to meet.

Similar analyses in different contexts have been reported in the works of Berkenkotter and Ravotas (1997), Engeström (2007a), and Sannino (2010). Berkenkotter and Ravotas (1997, pp. 268-269) analysed the stabilising categorisation of writing practices among psychotherapists and showed how clients' and therapists' 'voices' differed in written therapy reports. Their findings included reconstruction of customers' emic, highly contextual talk, and therapists' etic, decontextualised categorisation. Engeström reported on an analysis of two tools used (care calendar and care map), and the construction of patients in the health care context. In the analysis he showed how to put 'inert stabilizing knowledge into movement' and make 'visible the emergence of possibility knowledge' (Engeström, 2007a, p. 274). Sannino's study was realised in a school context by analysing from teacher trainees' field notes the abstract notions of pupils and the transition to contextual and concrete conceptualisations of pupils. Her analysis was based on the first learning action, which expanded to a four-step pattern. The analysis revealed movement toward a theoretical conceptualisation of pupils among the teacher trainees (Sannino, 2010, pp. 156-157).

7.3. Analytical tool

These three studies provided me with material to construct an analytical tool for analysing the customer as a core of work discourse. The frame of analysis helped to identify an expressed understanding of customers both thematically and with linguistic cues. I named the discourses stabilising discourse (abstract), dynamic discourse (concrete), and possibility discourse (between abstract and concrete). The tool is presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Stabilising, dynamic, and possibility discourse analytical tool

Stabilising discourse (abstract)	Possibility discourse (between abstract and concrete)	Dynamic discourse (concrete)
Formal nominalisation	In between formal and narrative	Narrative style
Classification schemes	In between classification and narrative	Narrative style
Decontextualised and minimally temporal	Possibilities in the future	Temporal, contextual, located
Organisational focus including personnel No possibilities for organisational and customer focus to meet	Conflicting sphere between organisational and customer focus Possibilities for organisational and customer focus to meet	Customer focus

The stabilising discourse on customers referred to formal and organisational discourse. The emphasis was on organisational priorities and the customer was not temporally located or minimally located, and decontextualised (Berkenkotter & Ravotas, 1997). Also, the customer appeared as a simplistic idea of someone using services provided by an organisation. Further, the interviewees used formal nominalisations (ibid.) and classification schemes (Sannino, 2010).

The dynamic customer discourse, instead, was more contextual and the customers appeared as ‘real’ persons in the discourse in the context studied. The organisational priorities met customers’ needs and customers were understood as the object of work. Also, use of narrative talk was an indication of the concrete realisation of customers (Berkenkotter & Ravotas, 1997). The possibility discourse revealed a conflicting sphere, a blurred idea in the conceptualisation of customers, thus showing the movement and possibilities for understanding customers as the object of work (Engeström, 2007a).

The objective of the tool was to provide a framework for the analysis. In practice, when reading the data it was systematically used by referring every quotation to the analytical tool: Does this quotation contain dimensions listed in the tool? What is the emphasis of the quotation? The focus was both on how interviewees talked and how they described encounters with customers or problems regarding, for example, customer service. In order to open up the analysis I give examples of quotations from the City of Espoo. First, I interpreted the customer as a core of the work discourse, which includes discourse on customers (the starting point of the work), to whom the personnel provide services according to customers’ needs. Also in this category were descriptions of organisational structures or the division of labour inhibiting personnel serving customers in a satisfactory

way. The following two excerpts present frequently identified types of discourse in the City of Espoo data.

That we remember the patient, it is anyway, for the patient we are here for, even the administration. AH1;Q:3:51

And of course the most important is the work with customers there. Meaning taking care of our own area's customers, that they get services they need. AH6;Q:8:2

The second example is a quotation from a stabilising customer discourse, which shows how the interviewee cares about her customers and is concerned that a number of various organisational duties and developmental actions may not be beneficial for customers. Organisational resources did not seem to allow the personnel to work with customers in a satisfactory way.

What I think is a problem is that **they [projects] come on the top of everything else**. You do your own work and then you have one, two, three, maybe 15 projects, you participate in. **It is impossible, it doesn't work**. Good, if you are able to do your basic work and then you have projects to conduct. It gives you bad feeling all the time. If you got time for that, half of your work would be taken away and you could concentrate on projects, then it wouldn't be a problem. But I think everyone has the same situation. That you have the basic work and thousands of projects on the top. **You have never time to think, that what I should do with this, where this meets the customers' needs**. AH3;Q:5:158 (bold added by hk)

There is a tendency in the quotation to see customers as the real object of work, but the organisational emphasis is not conducive to this way of working. The phrases in bold '[projects] come on the top of everything else', 'It is impossible, it doesn't work', and 'you have never time to think, that what should I do with this, where does this meet the customers' needs show the impossibility for organisational priorities and customers' points of view to converge in a satisfactory way.

7.4. Dynamic, stabilising, and possibility discourse

The City of Espoo

In the City of Espoo the stabilising discourse, which revealed a less developed conceptualisation of customers as the core of work, was expressed by interviewees as concerns over the lack of a shared vision between the elderly and the organisation. Also, the organisation's resources for development actions were described as imbalanced, causing frustration for the personnel. Various projects took too much time from everyday work with customers, yet plans for implementations had remained unarticulated for the personnel. In the following, one of the interviewees explains: 'but the goal should be that what this project does mean when meeting customers' needs.' Such project-based activities or 'projectisation' can be recognised in other fields of work in Finland, and they are also connected to the marketisation of the public sector (Brunila 2011, p. 429; see also Guile, 2012). Further, the data revealed the typical trend in current elderly care practices: less time for physical presence at customers' homes; thus, decrease in customer focus.

In some of the interviews in the City of Espoo customers appeared as impersonal groups by classification or by being presented as distant and minimally contextualised persons embedded in organisation processes. Such talk reflects typical managerial discourse and is not exceptional in organisational settings. The following excerpt is an example of the classification style of stabilising customer discourse, in which customers were more or less reduced to impersonal groups of persons.

In a way, if we think, there are, we are kind of accountable to the population, or maybe to this target group, elderly people in Espoo. And in other ways to owners, meaning decision makers in Espoo and through that to taxpayers. These are the aims we work toward. AH7;Q:9:24

The second excerpt shows how customer focus and its importance was brought into the discourse, but customers as such appear as distant and decontextualised persons going through organisational processes.

It is in the city strategy and that is the way it is, developing customer and resource steering so that the right patient is at the right time in the right place and receives the right kind of care. That our processes that we can do the right thing when elderly people's condition gets worse at home. That we can do diagnosis, arrange care quickly, arrange rehabilitation efficiently so that they get home and it goes well. These processes, ensuring these processes and the quality, these are the things. AH4;Q:6:77

The dynamic customer discourse in the City of Espoo consisted to a large extent of explaining who the customers were and in what way they were the starting point for service provision. The following excerpt is an example of such discourse.

Customers' and relatives' opinions are extremely important and specially customers' needs. What is the need at home, what kind of need does she/he bring up? There can be things that she/he brings up and what she/he needs, and that we can't offer, but we aim to direct those things to someone else. But it is the customer – that's why we are here – and the customer is the be all and end all. AH6;Q:8:153

The interviewee repeated the typical customer orientation discourse, yet contextualised the customer in care activities. The discourse provided insight to customers' needs and how they could be fulfilled instead of treating the customer as a distant outsider in service encounters.

In the next example the interviewee followed a similar customer focus discourse. The interviewee answered the question about the core of their work by emphasising customers and their needs with reference to temporality. She explained how the caregivers and work practices had changed in parallel with customers' needs and how the organisation should continue this trend in the future. Here customers were understood as contextualised 'real' persons.

Well, it is definitely the customers. That is our aim that it is the work we provide, whether it is care, nursing, or cleaning or whatever, it has to come from customers' needs. And parallel with that we have changed and developed. But we also hope that

in the future we can keep in mind that the needs come from customers. We direct our activity towards that. That the customer, not the personnel, is the starting point of the services we offer. But we aim to, when we have courses we ask what knowledge they have and what they have done so far. AH8;Q:10:106

The following excerpts give perspective on how the character of home care work has changed. Two interviewees emphasised the object of their work as being customers and not home, as was the case some years earlier. In the City of Espoo and a number of other cities in Finland, support services, such as food delivery and shopping services, have been increasingly arranged by external service providers and are thus no longer the core of work of the home care unit employees.

And we are getting signals from above that we don't take care of homes but take care of customers there at home. AH15;Q:15:40

We take care of the person, not the home anymore. Of course we clean the kitchen, bed and toilet, which are essential. But we don't clean empty rooms, do spring-cleaning, wash windows, etc. And we don't do shopping anymore; instead we offer shopping services. We arrange it so that the person eats, but the food is delivered. The home aid, practical nurses don't do anything else nowadays but warm the food and so on. They don't cook from scratch. But there are exceptions, for some long term customers, that of course if it is very important for someone we use our time sometimes --- that you do whatever the person wants, so of course we do things, but not regularly. AH2;Q:4:116

In the excerpt above the interviewee described in detail what duties belonged and did not belong to home care work. The customer appeared as a 'real' person who was temporally contextualised: 'not the home anymore', 'don't do shopping anymore', and 'nowadays'. Also, she brought individual services into the discussion, since some of the customers were provided tailored services when considered necessary.

In the City of Espoo a number of thematically described conflicting situations were identified in the possibility discourse. The interviewees expressed their concerns about, for example, balancing between business logic and ethical issues in service provision. Further, and not surprisingly, the most common discourse concerned balancing between organisational resources and customers' needs. The interviewees felt that due to lack of resources they did not have possibilities for providing the best care for customers. Lack of resources was observable as more fragmented care, less physical presence at the customer's home, lack of personnel, and poorly organised work and division of labour. One interviewee expressed herself critically: '(...) if we take care of machines or... to caricature the situation, do we take care of IT systems or customers?'

The following excerpt expresses a clear objective for providing satisfactory customer service, but insufficient organisational resources inhibited such aims.

We try to get our own service to be the kind of quality that would be as good as possible from the customer's point of view. But it is not that simple to make it function – in the field I have described to you. That resources don't grow in relation to the growth of population. AH12;Q:13:4

The City of Espoo was described by several interviewees as a dynamic and developing organisation. This was evident also in the following excerpt which brought up the temporal dimension regarding the development of Espoo's activities and their relation to customers.

The Espoo organisation is indeed, it is challenging, modern, fast – a little too fast, that you don't have time ---- do all the good things before they change to a different direction. That the fruits don't have time to ripen, before we are already in a new train. The basic needs are still there and let's say that in elderly care and home care the visions of customers and the visions of the city don't always meet. I have to say that. AH2;Q:4:93

The interviewee felt that changes in the organisation had been carried out too fast and thus positive innovations had neither provided benefits for customers nor the organisation itself. She explained that 'the basic needs are still there' and the objectives of the organisation and customers did not necessarily meet due to the rapid changes. The conflicting sphere revealed balancing between the organisation and customer focus.

A different dimension in the possibility discourse was the personnel's position. One interviewed manager emphasised the personnel's role (which in this analysis represents organisational priority) in service production and serving customers in the best possible way. She considered the personnel as the core of the work and through the personnel the customer. Still, the organisational focus was emphasised.

Well, core of work, it is personnel and through personnel the patient. It is the patient, if the personnel feels good, is professional, it all benefits the patient. That is the idea. But this is the way I see my job, first comes the personnel, even though the patient is of course the guiding light. But I don't take care of patients, but I support the personnel and enable good care for patients. That is my job, the most important job that the personnel can take care of, give their best for the patients. AH1;Q:3:36

As I indicated earlier, in this analytical framework personnel represented organisations and an organisational focus. Employees are thus conceptualised as abstract rather than concrete entities in regard to customer focus. Therefore, the findings regarding conceptualising employees as customers are to a certain extent blurred. It is notable that the New Public Management doctrine is argued to emphasise the point of view of the organisations and services, while at the same time it undermines employees and the quality of working life (Kalliola and Nakari, 2006, p. 35). Hence, the described tendency to balance the focus between employees, organisations, and customers is an important aspect to address.

The City of Tampere

The City of Tampere data already revealed signs of lacking customer focus several years prior to the interviews. The contemporary challenges described concerned to a great extent implementation of the New Management Model in the city organisation. The new model, following the New Public Management approach, introduced in a profound way the salience of customer focus in service production and organisational practices.

The following data excerpt from the interview of an elected official presents a nominal and decontextualized discourse in which 'the real' customer was hidden behind 'processes' and organisational jargon. The interviewee brought into the discussion customer orientation

and ‘making the customer a king’, which is typical for business and the New Public Management discourse. The idea of customers, however, remained abstracted from practice, and organisational priorities were emphasised.

Yes, I think, that it is an important part that we develop specifically the processes starting from customers, that the administrative sector’s boundary thinking can be blurred. Can the boundaries be blurred genuinely, and will there be a real process model, that is a big question mark. (...) and then this Tampere model, where we move to processes starting from the customers, with support processes, when the processes move from the customer that it is raised to a king the customer there, that is the only right way to work here. And I think that is the core of the change here. CH1;Q:63:59

In another example from the City of Tampere, an interviewee explained how the New Management Model and the purchaser-provider split had transferred more responsibilities to day care managers, thus affecting the customer focus.

But after that [receiving strategies and rules on how to do the work] the realisation in practice, responsibility and power are in the field. That this area is growing extremely fast and these 77 places for day care will soon not be enough in this area, so it is a concrete question mark at the moment how the purchaser side will react to this. Because at the moment in practice the responsibility is in the field, so that I have to think about how I can serve all the customers. CH7;Q:60:105

The interviewee was concerned about her possibilities of serving all the customers in a satisfactory way, thus showing the tendency to see customers as objects of her work. Yet, organisational priorities were emphasised and the interviewee brought up her position (representing the organisation) and the vast amount of responsibility she had been given to respond to service demands. Also, the excerpt revealed how the purchaser-provider split had blurred the division of labour inside the organisation: ‘it is a concrete question mark at the moment how the purchaser side will react to this’.

The dynamic discourse in the City of Tampere was expressed in manifold ways and included the aim to provide citizens services that are easy to use, focusing genuinely on customers and allocating resources according to needs. Also, conceptualising children as customers and giving parents possibilities for influencing and participating, yet not burdening them extensively were described by the interviewees.

The following example introduces how, according to the interviewee, the object of work in day care had ‘genuinely’ changed.

But I think that customer orientation, what is, even though now we here in day care think, always have thought, that everything is for the child and so on, but it hasn’t been like that. Now for the first time I think that now it is kind of education, partnership and so that when we start thinking what it is in practice... CH10;Q:58:19

The interviewee felt that they had earlier considered children as the object of their work, although it had not been realised as such. It seemed that customer focus had only recently progressed toward understanding children as the object of work. Hence, temporality and contextuality, as well as movement toward customer orientation, were identified. Similar dimensions of understanding the object of work are also evident in the following excerpt.

And we have done a lot. We have really focused on the customer's point of view. And, on the other hand, it is good, because we don't wrestle with the financing, because we are not yet really in the purchaser-provider split... as day care is one jump ahead or many jumps ahead, so we have been able to focus on the qualitative factors and the customer, and consider the points of views points of view of families and children. And that how we can help each other and use each other's strengths and make the path of learning easier so that it is nice and safe for the child when spending time here. CH14;Q:65:155

The interviewee emphasised their efforts to provide customer-oriented services. She brought up contextual and temporal dimensions, and referred to the purchaser-provider pilot and the resources which had allowed them to develop their services in a customer-oriented way.

In the City of Tampere only a few statements in the possibility discourse referred to thematically described conflicting situations in service provision. Rather, the data revealed a neutral movement between an organisational and a customer focus, which was expressed linguistically and thematically. The interviewees talked, for instance, about the service provision that day care centre personnel were ready to give in accordance with customers' needs; how the personnel's service orientation in the City of Tampere had improved, what the relationship was between customers and the purchaser-provider split and process thinking; and how quality control benefitted personnel and customers.

One example of conflicting situations was the uncertainty about who defines customers' needs. The interviewee asked: 'Is it the customer or is it, after all, civil servants on the provider's side?' Another example of conflicting situations was inflexible organisational structures, which are presented in the following excerpt.

N2: Well, last year we had a situation where we had quite a few, children left the preschool... they were only in preschool and went home. (...) So we thought that we could help the parents in particular. The customers' point of view was that they had in the same place a safe school day for children, that they could make it [possible]. Or I mean that we could do it...

N1: ##Yes, yes.

N2: and children could come in the morning and go to school and then come back here in the afternoon. But it was difficult. That still we think of the sectors.... that this is my area...

N1:#Yes, yes.

N2: and this is my area even though we are in the same field of work.

N1: Yes, yes.

N2: School children's morning and afternoon activities, school and day care...

N1: Yes.

N2: we are the same, but still it is so difficult. If we really think of the customers' point of view, then it is not. It is quite difficult for the management. CH14;Q:65:161

The interviewee described their objectives to develop better services for the customers. However, the organisational structures seemed to inhibit their efforts. Here the discourse was narrative, contextual, and local, but it indicated how the organisational structures and emphasis on organisational priorities were obstacles for developing services in a customer-

oriented way. One argument for the New Management Model in the City of Tampere was that it strengthened political decision making. In the interview, a town councillor pondered how the authorities should listen to citizens and thus provide needed services at the right time. She brought up a real experience of visiting as a town councillor a few day care centre kitchen units in the city. In this way she contextualised customers (through kitchen service providers) in the discourse in a narrative way. But she continued by criticising the emphasis on organisational priorities, which seemed to inhibit the voice of the customer from being heard in the City of Tampere. Thus, balancing between customers and the organisation was apparent in her talk.

In terms of strengthening trust in the political system, I don't know. I think that the trust in political systems strengthens when people get the services they need when they need them. And that to have not only freedom of speech but that people are also listened to when they say something. That the ways of getting there, the ways are anyway close to the field level. I think that if I, as a town councillor, go and ask in the kitchen 'how are you?', that increases trust in the political system much more than if I changed the places of two civil servants in the organisation chart somewhere there. I know nothing about how the service forums [for citizens] start functioning. I am now quite aware of the system, that where the benefits are that are supposed to be attained and where they come from. But in a city, size of Tampere the problem is that the management is so far away from the field as a rule that it doesn't seem to be face-to-face interaction. CH13;Q:56:1

The interviewee herself and her actions could be understood as an attempt to promote the personnel's wellbeing by showing interest in their work and by visiting workplaces and listening to personnel. Her active approach initiated practices that do not remain entirely at discourse level. It reminds us that customer satisfaction is argued to be attained through satisfied personnel.

The Finnish Road Administration

In the Finnish Road Administration the stabilising discourse and interviewees' concerns regarding customer orientation were connected to a large extent to the new Service Commitment document and the character of the new long term contract model with service providers. The interviewees pondered how the new contract had affected the quality of road building, management, and maintenance, and in addition, its implications for customer approach. Further, they wondered how it had affected the position of small service providers competing with large companies, and the earnings of service providers generally.

One of the interviewees expressed his doubts of whether long term contracts enabling flexible working methods and product development would actually benefit the customers after all.

And I believe that this long contract period leads to the service producer thinking carefully about its own activities during the long contract period; how it can manage them in the best possible way, as you said. But then, does it lead to the road user getting better services with these contracting models than with others? It is hard to believe, because we have defined the service level, which they [service providers]

have to reach during the contract period. And it is difficult for me to believe they would voluntarily want to raise it higher. Because money is tight there. And really tight, that the company does not have any extra money. So I think that they keep the service level where we demand it, not higher. And I don't think we even expect that. BH13/14;Q:45:99

The excerpt emphasised organisational priorities in describing the service provision procedures. Customers as a real object of work seemed to have vanished. A similar diminishing of customers is evident in the following examples. In the first one, the interviewee in my view repeated typical New Public Management discourse, which is also expressed by other interviewees in the Finnish Road Administration as well as in other studied organisations: customers do not care who provides or finances the service.

I don't think there is any difference, and can't be, because from the point of view of road users – what does it matter how the road is done or financed? It is more this kind of method of realising a project or providing service. BH12;Q:48:63

The interviewee abstracted the customer by emphasising the organisations' point of view and at the same time underestimated and diminished customers as participatory and interested citizens with opinions of their own. Recognising customers as the object of work was lacking. In the last excerpt an abstract and vanishing customer appeared in a different way.

(...) has happened this kind of interesting awakening in this work that she drives this kind of radical, new point of view in this work and criticises our way of communicating. That we all the time talk about, that our focus is on roads, building roads, maintaining roads, managing roads. And we should talk about traffic services. The main objective for us is not managing the road, it is [only] one question in this work. That we should go and check what kinds of needs people have. BH9;Q:49:100

Despite giving voice to customers at the end of the excerpt, understanding of customers remained rather abstract. The emphasis was on organisational approaches to service provision and traffic services, which they, the purchasers, 'should talk about'.

Regarding the dynamic discourse, the Finnish Road Administration data provided a thematic understanding of how customer service and customer orientation had grown in the organisation. Also, it concerned how the end user or road user focus had increasingly received more attention during the years prior to the conducted interviews.

Indeed the customer's point of view has been emphasised, meaning the needs of road users, car drivers, professional drivers, private drivers and economic life. And this is more emphasised now than earlier. And perhaps they have been the focus earlier, but we didn't talk about them, maybe they were taken care of in practice. BH6;Q:55:20

The excerpt above had the classification style of listing customers, but a temporal dimension and movement towards a more profound customer focus were also identified.

Another dimension in the customer discourse was connected to the idea of the changed customership. The organisational reform had changed the structure of the service production and the roles of the agents. Earlier the Finnish Road Administration considered their

financier, the Ministry of Transportation, as their customer. During the interviews, however, road users or road user associations were understood as customers of the Finnish Road Administration and not the financier. As a new organisation the Finnish Road Administration no longer had their own service production. Instead, they purchased services from a number of companies, thus giving the Finnish Road Administration a position of customer regarding service producers. They had also made systematic efforts to emphasise to service producers that their customer was the road user, not the Finnish Road Administration. Further, they had implemented a new bonus-based system to encourage service providers to produce good quality service to meet customers' needs. In practice, feedback was collected regularly from road users and their representatives. Positive feedback guaranteed an extra financial bonus for service providers. In the tendering process the Finnish Road Administration took into account service providers' plans concerning collection of feedback from road user customers.

In the following excerpt the interview explained the procedure of customer feedback and presented customers as objects of work.

We ask local inhabitants' opinions of road maintenance and if they are satisfied, the contractor will be paid an extra bonus. In this way we try to encourage contractors to understand that they work for road-users, not only for FINNRA. And the character of maintenance work is such that... it is not enough to prevent slipperiness, remove the snow, but it is also important how it is done and what time it is done. Is it done so that it doesn't disturb commuting traffic, but the work is done before that? This is kind of the idea of the bonus system, to encourage the contractor to think what the best option for the road-users is. BH2;Q:46:40

The description of actual actions taken to satisfy customers' needs was evident in the interviewee's discourse. Further, the temporal and contextual dimensions strengthened the concreteness of customer talk.

In the Finnish Road Administration the possibility discourse revealed challenges in understanding customers as objects of work, but conflicting situations as such were not described extensively. Indications of a more profound customer orientation were identified in the data. One interviewee, however, expressed his concern about diminishing organisational resources initiating changes in the division of labour. He felt that the resources might not be sufficient to serve customers in a purposeful way, and create uncomfortable situations for employees in service encounters.

(...) but this purchaser side altogether, specifically those who are in the maintenance or building area, that side shouldn't be diminished at all. If there is less than one man per project, it is insufficient in big projects. Of course the small ones can be run. The customer starts seeing it. Our customers are kind of land owners and whom we have to be responsible for. If this kind of situation comes, we have to say that I don't know, so it is a little embarrassing. BH3;Q:53:15

The organisational priorities and financial resources conflicted with customers and their needs. The possibility discourse showed that confusion or different points of views in regard to who the customer is came up frequently in the Finnish Road Administration data. Earlier, for instance, the ministry, which was the financier, was addressed as their customer. The Finnish Road Administration had put great emphasis on changing the idea of the object of

their work from organisations, or simply roads, toward their customers, persons. This had also been the message communicated to their service providers.

Well, they [contractors] should think this way [road users being the customers] in these life cycle projects. But their customer is of course FINNRA, or the purchaser, too. But in the 4-road project, for example, I would almost say that there too, they thought of the road user. Because it was a good way of doing it that time, that it depends on the traffic volumes. That if it is in bad condition, nobody wants to drive there. They drive the old road. BH10;Q:54:66

The excerpt revealed movement between understanding the road user as the customer or the Finnish Road Administration organisation as the customer. The interviewee felt that their contractors should understand road users as their customers. He added that 'of course' the Finnish Road Administration or another purchaser is a customer, 'too'. Still, following the organisation's strategy, the object of the service providers' work should be road users. Further, at the beginning of the example the road user customer seemed to be rather abstract, but later the customer was more contextual and attempts to give customers a voice were identified: 'if it is in bad condition, nobody wants to drive there'.

The Helsinki University Library

A stabilising discourse was not identified in the Helsinki University Library data. Thus, I begin by presenting excerpts of dynamic discourse. In the interviews the participants were asked directly what they considered as the core of their work. The replies provided two rationales: first, customers and second, information were understood as the core of library work. In the following excerpt one librarian explained that for him the core of the work, on one hand, is helping customers, and on the other hand, information librarians aim to provide to customers.

Well that is the core [helping customers with their problems and questions]. What would we do there alone? And on one hand the object is a lot when the customer comes, she/he has some big or smaller problems or questions or object of interest or whatever it is that we would give some reasonable answer to. On the other hand the object is as much so-called information. Where it might be and we bring the person to the information or the opposite. It can... sometimes, by the way, be that way that: "Go to the next floor and ask there (laughs). That is the quickest and easiest way. That is the core, how I have understood it. a1h;Q:1:28

The interviewee highlighted customers as a starting point for their work. The organisational settings did not disregard customers; on the contrary: 'what would we do there alone?' Also, the librarian contextualised customers and explained clearly and narratively how they served customers in practice.

Another interviewee was hesitant concerning the question about the core of work. In his narrative talk he considered customers as 'real', for instance, by giving voice to one customer.

It is training the target group and doing things together with the target group. We should get closer to the seminar leaders and researchers and their thinking, and do things together with them. Maybe that when the post graduate student last autumn, who sent me the text and then we read the article together and checked what she/he had done and how she/he made arguments --- Something like this. It... I don't know if it is the core now, but that ... it could be. b3h;Q:3:44

The example provided an important insight into changes in library work, since the interviewee was uncertain about the boundaries of the work. He pondered if serving a customer by 'reading the article together' was really the core of library work, but 'it could be'. Yet, he kept the customer and the customers' needs in focus.

Uncertainty regarding customers and their needs is seen in the following excerpt. It shows how librarians ought to be able to infer their customers' needs since 'customers don't necessarily know what they need'.

But of course there is the thing that customers don't necessarily know what they need. That in that phase we have to be professional and find out that what kind of services we can offer them. And then check if they were useful for them. It can happen that way, too. b4h;Q:4:14

Customers' priorities were emphasised, but librarians' professionalism is mentioned in relation to serving customers better.

In the last excerpt the focus is strongly on concrete customers and the customer focus: 'We do it for customers'. The concrete customer is also evident in a narrative reference to the customer inquiry the library had conducted prior to the interview.

At least now at the moment, in relation to the development of library work, it would be good to remember that we do it for customers and we boldly try all new service forms. And do the work invisibly. In our user inquiry just published today there was a 'thank you for the invisible work'. Some customers see it, but the thing is that something could be done to make it more visible. b4h;Q:4:43

It is notable that the interviews in the library were conducted as part of an intervention aiming at developing library services. This was evident when an interviewee explained that the library should be prepared to innovate and develop new kinds of services for customers.

The possibility discourse in the Helsinki University Library data revealed that one of the main objectives of the work was serving customers and the customer approach indeed had a strong emphasis throughout the interviews. Yet, conflicting opinions were identified. One of the library professionals interviewed explained that occasionally librarians needed to be selective, and prioritise which customers to serve in depth and which not. Further, as the following excerpt shows, it seemed that not everyone agreed on the benefits of increased service orientation:

I have noticed or I have heard that some people don't want to be messed around [by customers]. And that was incomprehensible for me, because I have always thought that we wouldn't be there without customers. That we have to serve them. Of course we must be aware that we are professionals and that we can't be messed around. But it starts there, we get a request and we do it. b4h;Q:4:45

Even though it was partly a reconstruction of a third party's opinions, the excerpt revealed a delicate balance between the needs of personnel and customers. The interviewed librarian had a clear insight that the object of work was customers and their needs, and that librarians should use their expertise to fulfil customers' needs. But the third voice brought to the discussion seemed to have a less compliant idea of customer orientation and serving customers. Librarians' professionalism was to a certain extent contested by the customer approach. Corresponding findings were identified by Newman and Vidler (2006) in the health care context in the United Kingdom.

A similar conflicting sphere was evident also in the next excerpt. The library professional did not seem to have a clear understanding of the boundaries of the work tasks. Also, the customer was discussed in a contextualised and concrete way, but the organisational focus was stronger, and left the customer in the background.

And I have started to evaluate a little, that if someone calls and asks something very simple, like 'where is this citation from?', I don't want to use too much of my time on this. Because in principle I could look into it for weeks. And I don't really see that it is our job to serve somebody's curiosity so much that we should spend our time doing this. That's how I see it. a1h;Q:1:19

The excerpt showed a temporal movement in the librarians' actions: 'I have started to evaluate', with an assessment of the services the organisation provides: 'I don't really see that it is our job'. I interpret this as being connected to changing library work, which needs to be reconceptualised in order to define the boundaries of services provided. Tools and collective agreement seemed to be missing in regard to the changing work environment.

Summary

The table below (Table 10) presents the distribution of coded quotations of stabilising, dynamic, and possibility discourse in each studied organisation.

Table 10. The distribution of coded quotations of stabilising, dynamic, and possibility discourse in each organisation

	Espoo	Tampere	FINNRA	Library	Total
Stabilising	15	9	18	0	42
Dynamic	18	10	16	13	57
Possibility	18	15	12	6	51
Total	51	34	46	19	150

A quantitative observation shows that the dynamic discourse (57) was dominant and the possibility discourse (51) had the second strongest emphasis. The stabilising discourse (42)

had the fewest occurrences. Quantitative findings implicate that the dominant character of the interviewees' discourse was a tendency to understand customers as concrete and the real object of work. There was, as expected, variation between the organisations, and, for example, the stabilising discourse was not identified at all in the Helsinki University Library.

In the City of Espoo the discourses in the three categories were quantitatively rather even. Dynamic (18) and possibility discourses (18) had the strongest emphasis, whereas the stabilising discourse (15) had the fewest occurrences. A qualitative analysis suggested that customers were realised in the discourse both thematically and by using linguistic cues providing a variety of understanding of customers. The stabilising discourse revealed the lack of a shared vision of customers, and that both the city and the burden of conducting development projects prevented customer orientation. Linguistically, customers were presented as impersonal groups by classifications that were minimally contextualised in organisational processes or service provision. The dynamic discourse was expressed by a narrative style of talking, temporal and contextual locations, and by bringing into the discussion a change indicating that the object of work is customers and no longer the homes of customers. The possibility discourse showed tensions between business logic and ethics in care practices, tensions between diminishing organisation resources and customer focus, and concerns about rapid organisational changes affecting customers. Also, personnel as customers were identified.

In the City of Tampere the stabilising discourse (9) and dynamic discourse (10) were fairly even. The strongest emphasis was on the possibility discourse (15), which referred to an unestablished and yet to be developed customer focus in the city. The qualitative analysis in the City of Tampere showed that the stabilising discourse thematically focused on emphasising organisational priorities, such as transferring more responsibilities to managers and thus questioning customer focus to some extent. Also, organisational jargon was used to abstract customers further away from the administration. The dynamic discourse was identified as thematic descriptions of aims to serve customers better by providing needed services and allocating necessary resources. Also identified were an understanding of children as genuine customers and the object of work, and parents' possibilities of influencing and participating. Linguistic, contextual, temporal, and narrative styles of talk were used by interviewees.

The possibility discourse in the City of Tampere was realised by using thematic descriptions, linguistic cues, and a narrative style of talk. Descriptions of conflicting situations were few; they concerned the uncertainty of who defines customers' needs and inflexible organisational structures in service provision. Generally the focus of the possibility discourse was on moderate balancing between organisational and customers' priorities, such as descriptions of customer orientation that lacked the possibilities for realisation.

In the Finnish Road Administration the stabilising discourse (18) was dominant. The dynamic discourse (16) had a substantial number of occurrences, whereas the possibility discourse (12) was the weakest. The stabilising discourse was mainly expressed by thematic descriptions, which prioritised organisational focus or concerned new working methods which did not necessarily seem to benefit customers. Also, customers' position was diminished when explaining that they were not interested in service provision procedures. The dynamic discourse was expressed by thematic and temporal descriptions and by using temporal and narrative styles of talking. Customer focus was said to have increased compared to previous years. In the possibility discourse, descriptions of conflicting

situations were not identified. The discourse revealed confusion regarding customer focus and the aims toward customer focus, which were occasionally restricted by insufficient organisational resources. Confusion regarding who the customers are was also noted.

In the Helsinki University Library, the dynamic discourse (13) was dominant and no stabilising discourse was identified. The possibility discourse (6) had the fewest occurrences with some indications of conflicting situations. The analysis showed thematic expressions regarding understanding customers as the object of work as well as contextualisation of customers through a narrative style of talk. The possibility discourse was conveyed with thematic expressions regarding the balance between serving customers and being a professional librarian.

7.5. Conclusions

Quantitative calculations showed that on average the realisation of the concept customers in the analysed discourse was the conceptualisation of customers as the concrete object of work. Such quantitative findings provided generalisations of public sector customers expressed by interviewees from four different public sector organisations. A qualitative analysis revealed a variety of thematically and linguistically produced expressions of customers, and understanding them as the object of work. A general comparison of the organisations showed similarities, but also minor differences in the customer discourse. I will discuss the findings in the following.

The City of Espoo

The City of Espoo was described by several interviewees as a dynamic, innovative, and rapidly changing organisation. The city organisation had gone through two major transformations in the past, first in the 1990s and later in the 2000s. The last reorganisation was a returning to the previous centralised organisation model and a dismantling of the regionally divided organisation. Taking into consideration the speed of these substantial reorganisations, the descriptions of the character of the city are understandable. Large organisational changes always require time for implementation and for adopting new working methods in practice. Often such changes include introductions of new concepts (such as a customer) which may be fundamentally different from previously used concepts.

I interpreted the descriptions and expressions of stabilising customer discourse in the City of Espoo as a result of rapidly adapting to the New Public Management approach. Thus, the idea of customer was handed down by a top-down process leaving it abstracted from the practice. The introduction of the concept has probably lacked to some extent a collective discussion with grassroots workers. Thus, aims to create and understand the new working methods connected to the new concept were minimally realised.

Similarly, the findings, which revealed a tendency among the employees to see customers as objects of work, but which was occasionally restricted by insufficient organisational resources were an indication of the abstract introduction of the concept of customer. The concept, which originated from business ideology and the New Public Management approach, was abstractly introduced to public sector practices, and conflicted with the public sector ethos, causing tensions for employees in service encounters.

Dynamic discourse in the City of Espoo revealed a conceptualisation of customers and employees as a unity, not as separate isolated parts of service production. Customers and their needs were explained to have had an influence on developing work practices in home care, and it was hoped that such development would be continued in the future. Productive interaction between customers and employees was identified, thus promoting vertical learning at the organisational level (see Toiviainen, 2003). Customers and their needs were understood as objects of work. Another indication of conceptualising customers and personnel as a unity instead of separate parts in the service production was descriptions of personnel being the object of work. As described by a home care manager, personnel were thus customers of elderly care and elderly people customers of the management level through the personnel (see du Gay, 1996).

The object of work was also described as developed within a few decades from taking care of homes to taking care of persons. The initiatives for conceptualising elderly people with their own needs instead of part of a passive mass already began in the 1940s and 1950s. Strategies and policies supported the development through the following decades. In the 1980s the discourse and policies continued the trend as the objectives of well-being rather than housing of the elderly became apparent. Yet, as late as the 1980s in the City of Espoo elderly people were bunched together organisationally with drug users, alcoholics and vagrants. It seemed, though, that by the 2000s the categorisation had changed and elderly people were now understood to some extent as active and influential customers.

The City of Tampere

The City of Tampere had chosen to closely follow the New Public Management approach and organise its service production by implementing an internal purchaser-provider split. Prior to the interviews the decision regarding the implementation of the New Management Model from the beginning of 2007 had been made. The new model changed decision-making structures (model of mayorship), administrative structures (process thinking combining sectors), and production structures (purchaser-provider split dividing agents). One objective, following the New Public Management doctrine, was to strengthen the customer focus in service provision. The interviews were conducted in 2006 in the units undergoing the purchaser-provider pilot since 2005.

As we can see, we are talking about very extensive reforms in the City of Tampere. Hence, identification of balancing between customer focus and organisation focus was hardly surprising. The findings suggested that the reforms were a top-down process in which the concept of customer and understanding of customers as the object of work were somewhat abstracted from practice. There were also intensive attempts to improve customer orientation and quality control aiming to benefit customers and serve them in a satisfactory way. On the other hand, there seemed, to be challenges in the division of labour and understanding of who defines customers' needs. Many responsibilities had been transferred to day care centre managers, which created concerns regarding how to manage the growing number of customers. Such transfer of responsibilities was connected to the blurred division of labour between purchasers and providers inside the organisation (see Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009).

Customers' needs are at the core of service discourse in the public and private sectors. The data revealed uncertainty and doubts of how customers' needs were understood and defined in the City of Tampere. It was questioned whether it was primarily management,

civil servants, or someone else in the position of defining needs. Management is often claimed to be too far away from practice, and thus lack valuable face-to-face interaction with both grassroots workers and customers. Top-to-down processes are likely to provide not only an abstract understanding of specific needs of customers but also abstract understanding of customers as a whole. To correct this problem more profound face-to-face interaction between authorities or city councillors and customers is necessary. As one interviewee pointed out, the same is true for trying to increase trust in the political system.

Several new concepts have been gradually introduced at the national level and in the City of Tampere since the 1980s. In addition to customers and educational partnership, concepts such as quality, service orientation, customer inquiries, values of self-determination, Educare, and customers with rights and responsibilities have entered the discourse and practice. Regarding day care customers, the historical analysis revealed that as late as the 1980s the annual reports in the City of Tampere did not recognise customers holistically. Customers appeared rather as numbers: visits of various professionals, number of day care places, and rates of day care places. Based on the data this indicates that recognition of customers had increased only about 15 years prior to the conducted interviews. In such a short period of time customer focus at the organisational level had not yet been fully established. Further, especially taking into account signs of top-down processes in the introduction of new concepts, the findings seem to make sense.

As an exception, examination of the data identified descriptions of development in conceptualising children as the object of work. Such change was to some extent connected to the concept of educational partnership, which was introduced in the day care context in the 2000s. Customers, children and parents were now understood as equal participants in service provision with care givers, allowing them an active role in day care practices.

The development of day care has been an interplay between social and pedagogical aims creating tensions in policies and practice (Hänninen & Valli, 1986, p. 134; Petäjäniemi & Pokki, 2010, p. 7). It is possible that the challenges of the division of labour and the internal organisational boundaries inhibiting development of customer-oriented services originate from the dualistic history of day care. Such a connection, however, was not identified clearly in the analysis.

The Finnish Road Administration

The Finnish Road Administration was an example of ‘a pure’, external model of a purchaser-provider split in which providers and the purchaser organisation are separated so that the purchaser has no production of its own. Historically examined, the predecessors of the Finnish Road Administration had imitated private sector procedures and taken preliminary steps towards a market oriented organisation since the 1970s and 1980s. In 1998 the production and authority services were divided, leading the way towards a pure purchaser-provider split, which was finally implemented in 2001. The reorganisation was notable not only due to becoming entirely an administrative agent purchasing services, but also due to increasing market and customer orientation.

Despite the duration of systematic development towards a customer-oriented organisation, customers appeared in the discourse quantitatively as abstract rather than ‘real’ objects of work. The analysed documents at the discursive level, however, showed profound aims to develop the organisation toward customer orientation. For instance, the Customer Strategy and the Service Commitment, which were brought up in the interviews on a regular basis, were published as early as the 1990s. Conflicting situations were not identified in the

data, but descriptions of confusion about who customers of the Finnish Road Administration are were expressed. It is good to bear in mind that the interviewees were administrators who did not interact with road-user customers. They may have adopted managerial and organisational discourse and thus talked about customers in an abstract way, unaware of conflicting situations in service encounters.

Confusion of the identity of customers of the Finnish Road Administration revealed the dynamics of the concept. Organisational reforms had changed the structure of production and roles of the participants in service production. Confusions were explained to exist, for example, between financier customers, road-user customers, and the Finnish Road Administration as a customer. Paarlberg (2007) reported on similar goal conflicts in a governmental defence unit in the United States. The Finnish Road Administration had intensively communicated to service providers that road-users were their customers, not the Finnish Road Administration. It seemed that the purchaser organisation itself had had time to reconceptualise its new position and new ways of working, and was thus able to some extent balance between a customer and organisational focus. Yet, the analysis indicated that there was still need for learning in order to meet the challenges initiated by the new organisational structure and customer focus.

The reforms had strengthened not only the customer focus but also the market orientation and business approach in the Finnish Road Administration. It was hardly surprising that diminishing organisational resources and concerns of the quality of end-products were expressed in the interviews, thus revealing the balancing between use-value and exchange value in service production (Engeström, 1987; Miettinen, 2005). Because of market orientation, contracting, and compulsory competitive tendering, interviewees expressed concerns regarding changing social relations in the society. The new long-term model seemed to favour large companies, thus excluding from the competition small firms which were not able to commit to a long-term business relationship with the Finnish Road Administration and compete with large companies. If citizens are understood as customers of the Finnish Road Administration, it is worth asking whether such development increases or decreases customer orientation and what the objective of such a public organisation is.

One interesting but unsurprising finding was how the position of customers was diminished or even underestimated in the statement: 'customers do not care who provides or finances services'. Such a comment leads one to think that customers are not interested in or do not have opinions about the details of public service production. Similar discourse was also identified in other organisations studied and it can be identified in public discourse in Finland in general. In my view customers and citizens are not necessarily as ignorant as the discourse leads us to think.

The Helsinki University Library

Historically examined, the Helsinki University Library, unlike the other organisations in this study, had not followed extensive New Public Management procedures, such as using increasingly outsourced services or splitting the organisation into purchasers and providers. In the 1990s, however, the New Public Management discourse entered the library organisation, including customers and customer-orientation; yet customers were not extensively identified in the documents analysed in this study. They were expressed as numbers and statistics rather than 'real persons'.

At the national level, signs of service orientation and customer orientation in academic libraries were already identified in the 1940s and 1950s. In the Helsinki University Library,

customers and customer approach did not appear in documents on a large scale until the 2000s. The introduction of these new concepts and the new customer approach seemed to happen rapidly. Thus, uncertainty regarding the boundaries of librarians' work tasks in customer service was hardly surprising. The boundaries regarding serving customers seemed to be somewhat flexible and not yet well defined (see Fairclough, 2000 and du Gay, 1996). Doubts regarding intensive co-operation with customers were expressed in the interviews with reference to insufficient tools and/or rules in work practices.

Conflicting spheres were identified in the Helsinki University Library data as descriptions of balancing between serving customers and librarians' professionalism. On the one hand, serving and providing services to customers were understood as opposing professionalism. Such dualistic thinking revealed that 'serving customers' meant 'being messed around by customers'. Similar findings of the transfer of authoritative power were identified by Newman and Vidler in the health care context in the United Kingdom (Newman & Vidler, 2006). On the other hand, the relationship between customers and librarians concerned pondering whether to serve customers by following their wishes. Thus, the relationship between customers and library professionals was understood as a unity in which both parties worked together toward the same object, such as the customers' manuscript.

The interviews in the Helsinki University revealed that librarians were future-oriented in regard to customers and customer service. They described how important it was to find customers' needs even before customers had fully identified their needs themselves. Academic libraries' main customers, students, teachers, and researchers, increasingly used various digital services and the Internet, thus motivating librarians to explore customer needs more intensively. This finding indicates that librarians needed new kinds of learning in order to find something that is not there yet (see Engeström, 1987).

The findings in the data support the objective of seeing customers as 'real' objects of library work in the City Centre Campus Library. The introduction of customer thinking was not realised in the discourse as a top-down process. The interviewees did not use the general abstract managerial discourse identified in other organisations in this study. The majority of the interviewees worked in customer service on a daily basis, which may partly explain the absence of abstract customer discourse.

The findings from the four studied organisations suggested balancing between understanding customers as the object of work and customers abstracted from practice, thus showing the dynamic character of the concept of public sector customer. The description of the temporal development of the concept and especially the future-oriented thinking in the Helsinki University Library supported such conceptualisation. Also, conflicted situations which were identified in all the organisations except the Finnish Road Administration revealed the dynamics and possibilities for development of the concept.

8. CONCEPTUALISING CUSTOMERS AS EVALUATORS OF SERVICES

8.1. Customers as evaluators discourse

Marketisation of the public sector and introduction of the New Public Management procedures seem to have initiated a profound shift in public sector organisations from focusing on processes toward focusing on results and evaluation-oriented practices. I therefore chose to explore further the evaluating customer discourse identified in the first phase of the data analysis. A number of researchers have recognised a movement from putting primacy on processes of service practices, learning, or development toward end-products and the results of services (Edwards & Daniels, 2012; Hebson, Grimshaw, & Marchington, 2003; Hood, 1991). New practices emphasising evaluations, assessments, and results are indications of a profound change in the practices of public sector organisations. Civil servants' responsibility, for instance, now resembles private sector actors' concept of profit responsibility, which is rather different from the traditional public sector ethos (Kickert, 2001; Lähdesmäki, 2003). Emery and Giauque expressed their concerns about such a shift and suggested that in order to meet the new challenges, the public sector ought to reconstruct a new public sector ethos and change the public sector orientation from a result focused one back to a process focused orientation (Emery and Giauque, 2005, p. 654). This type of change, however, is not apparent in current public sector policies and practices.

Putting primacy on results, or productisation of services, calls for new tools and approaches to managing and measuring both the quality of services and performance of employees and service producers. Concepts such as quality, productisation, accountability, auditing, evaluation, and customer satisfaction have increasingly entered the public sector discourse and practice. Accountability, as an example, is a fairly new concept in the public sector and may create uncertainty in regard to its implementation and use. Accountability is a discursive exchange of accounts which defines the relationship of formal control between agents. Control can exist in the forms of annual appraisals, departmental reviews, or meetings with parents (in the day care or school context) in which the results of the activity or performance are to be evaluated. Teachers, for instance, can be accountable to guardians, parents, and students, all of them teachers' customers (Kickert, 2001; Lähdesmäki, 2003; Ranson, 2003).

Historically explored, the concept of quality management in the private sector has been a powerful tool or at least communicated as a powerful discourse for decades if not centuries. The ideology behind the concept of quality management holds the assumption that services and outcomes of work practices are products which can be objectively measured in order to optimise the results and eliminate unnecessary actions under managerial control. Interestingly, attempts to return to Taylorism and scientific management are argued to be evident in the New Public Management approach (Lorenz, 2012; Patomäki, 2007; see also Vaara, 2006 and Gruening, 2001). Use of quality tools has become a controversial topic even in the private sector, since the objective of quality management seems to have changed from the original purpose. Eero Vaara has raised the critical question of whether the meaning and principal objective of quality management has become an instrument for control rather than for good management. Similar concerns can be identified in the public sector (Vaara, 2006, pp. 415-418; also du Gay, 1996).

In addition to marketisation of the public sector, technological development has also increased the usage of tools for purposes of evaluation of services, employees, and organisations (du Gay & Salaman, 1992). Along with this trend customers have gained a stronger position in organisational activities, thus blurring the boundaries between the activity systems of service provision and customers. Further, customers are understood as active, influential, and participatory consumers having free choice and expected to be responsible for their own actions, including the processes of evaluation and assessment (Eräsaari, 2006; Hood, 1995).

In this chapter, I analyse how customers' position as influential and participatory service-users (introduced by the New Public Management ideology) is conveyed in employees' talk in the organisations studied. The analysis involves two steps. First, I explore the customer concept in relation to the dimensions of active and passive discourse. Second, I continue by exploring whether the customer discourse was stabilising or dynamic. In order to avoid repetition and facilitate the reading I provide only a limited number of data examples in both sections.

8.2. Conceptual framework and the analytical tool for active and passive discourse

The objective of the first phase of the analysis was to see how the evaluating customer appeared in the interviewees' discourse. The analysis used the dimensions of active and passive for the evaluating customer. A similar method was used by Jaana Pirkkalainen in her dissertation (2003), in which she analysed agency and work-related learning as historically developing phenomena in the activity theoretical framework. Pirkkalainen's data were curriculum brochures of two private banks she investigated how the discourse in the brochures of the private banks reflected historical types of organising work (see Engeström, 1995, p. 28). Hierarchical and bureaucratic work, as well as planned economy discourse were analysed with the dimensions of active and passive verbs in discourse related customers, personnel, or organisations.

In Pirkkalainen's analysis, the active form referred, for example, to a known and active agent 'we', or to customers in interaction with an organisation rather than remaining outside of the organisation. The passive form referred, for instance, to a collective, anonymous agent emphasising organisational needs and concealing who decided and implemented new initiatives. An agent was brought into the discourse implicitly rather than as an active agent (Pirkkalainen, 2003, p. 91).

Pirkkalainen's data, curriculum brochures, were different from the interview data used here, and which created challenges in conducting this study. The language used in the brochures was standard, written language, while the interviews were held in spoken, informal language. In the Finnish language the use of the passive form has increasingly been used in other persons (Hakulinen & Karlsson, 1979, p. 257). For instance, the third person plural, 'we go' (me menemme), is often expressed as a passive form in the spoken language (mennään or me mennään) but still meaning the active form. The second challenge was the language used. In Pirkkalainen's dissertation the collected data were in Finnish and the thesis was written in Finnish. In this study the interviews were conducted in Finnish, but the thesis was written in English. The passive mode in the Finnish language differs from the passive mode, for instance, in the Indo-European languages to which English belongs

(Siitonen, 1992). Siitonen (ibid., p. 367) wrote about the ‘so-called Finnish passive’, which should ‘be called the Finnish 4th person’, since it does not refer to lack of agent as clearly as in English.

Owing to the dissimilarities presented, I needed to use more interpretation in the analysis, which may have produced differences compared to Pirkkalainen’s analysis. In my view, however, the analytical tools seemed be adequate for the analysis, since passivity or activity not only concerned verbs, but also how the customer was brought into the discourse. My aim was to do the translation as accurately as possible keeping in mind the differences between the Finnish and English languages. The table below (Table 11) presents the tool created for the analysis.

Table 11. Active and passive evaluator customer analytical tool

Active customer	Passive customer
Active verb, clear who is acting	Passive verb, unclear who is acting, implicit agent
Named, known agent	Classified, anonymous agent
Customers part of the organisation	Customers outside the organisation

8.3. Active and passive customer discourse

The City of Espoo

Practices of evaluation and recognition of their importance became evident throughout the whole data of the City of Espoo. Thematically the evaluation discourse concerned satisfaction inquiries which were conducted among customers in order to receive feedback of provided services.

The following excerpt of active evaluator customer discourse shows what I considered a typical theme identified in the data: the discourse of customer feedback and quality control. The excerpt started with an expression of a customer as a passive evaluator: customer feedback ‘comes’ to the office without an identified agent. Later customers were described as conducting quality control and evaluation in interaction with the organisation.

Customer feedback that comes here, we do react to them. Then it of course is essential that we require that they [outsourced service providers] have some kind of quality control systems. So that they have in a way all the time self-evaluation. These kinds of things. And probably the thing that quality control realised by customers is extremely important. Customers or their relatives, that sometimes the customers can’t do it by themselves, in some dementia places, evaluate it. AH7;Q:9:51

I interpreted the discourse as emphasising the active evaluator more strongly than the passive, although it was within the boundaries of the dimension. The interview, however, brought customers and their relatives into the discourse as agents.

The excerpt showed how the customers had become quality controllers for outsourced service providers. When public services are outsourced, the responsibility for arranging the

services and quality of services remains with the public purchasers. Such responsibility drives public organisations to follow and control service production in a systematic way. Thus, evaluation and feedback procedures for customers have become essential in many public organisations. This strengthens the idea of active customers, but also customers as mediators of the evaluation practices when providing quality control for public organisations.

In the city of Espoo data most of the evaluating customer discourse was realised as passive. In the following excerpt the interviewees explained how they had conducted customer satisfaction inquiries and that they had received ‘feedback from the field’, meaning from the customers. The customers were not presented as actors and were not given an active role in the discourse.

Yes, we have done a kind of customer satisfaction inquiry, though a small one. And then we have feedback from the field, directly to employees and to us here in the office. AH8;Q:10:104

In the second excerpt, the feedback ‘comes to the supervisors’. Customers were hidden in the discourse and were not presented as having an active role in evaluation practices.

Satisfaction inquiries we have had, and inquiries for the whole city we have had and then we have done smaller ones. We collect customer feedback regularly concerning all the activities of the city, but during the last years it is only written feedback, which comes to the supervisor and to me; they are put on record. Spontaneous feedback that employees bring, it is rarely put on record. AH2;Q:4:115

In both excerpts the position of the organisation, ‘we’, ‘us’, and ‘the office’, had more emphasis. Customers were passive rather than active agents in the discourse even though they seemed to be integrated to some extent.

The City of Tampere

The following excerpts are of active evaluating customer discourse from the City of Tampere data. In the first one the interviewee described how in the day care context the evaluation procedures had not been implemented successfully or purposefully from the perspective of customers. The interviewee explained that the city’s customer satisfaction inquiries were too difficult. Such inquiries caused confusion among both parents and employees and also doubts regarding how they would be analysed and utilised in the future. Evaluators, in these cases parents, were brought into the discourse as active participants.

N2: But now it was... the inquiry was so new and as it had two rounds, that, does it work well or doesn’t it, and is it meaningful for me, a lot, not much, so parents had difficulties to find it,

N1: Yeah, yeah.

N2: so that, where to put it.

N1: Yes.

N2: And then when they were analysed how they are in relation. That which of these three four claims is the most important for families and which less important. And all

these were just subjective...

N1: Yes.

N2: analyses.

N1: Ok, yes.

N2: That there should be someone who could really analyse them.

N1: Ok, yes.

N2: We don't have that kind of knowledge. CH14;Q:65:154

In the second excerpt the interviewee continued with the same theme and explained parents had difficulties in understanding the questions in the inquiries.

Yes, the purchaser takes care of it [evaluation process], but... and the purchaser I think has ordered it in practice and the analysis. But then the planner, who I think is on the provider side, so the planners should support and help us to take it to the work community. But the instructions were very incomplete this year. (...) That, they only go half way, that, if we make very large inquiries, new difficult inquiries. Parents don't understand the inquiry, the personnel don't understand the inquiry and the Day Care Centre Managers should know how to run it, analyse it and find the objects of development. So it is quite, the instructions need improvement. CH14;Q:65:155

In both previous examples the customers were active agents and part of the organisation, even though not necessarily successfully. Interestingly, the excerpt also revealed the confusion in the division of labour between the purchaser and provider in the evaluation process. It seemed, according to the interviewee, that the purchaser was responsible for the evaluation, but the person responsible for planning the evaluation worked on the provider side. Such confusion regarding the division of labour connected to the purchaser-provider split was also identified in other empirical analyses in this thesis (see also Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009).

Organisational jargon and managerial discourse representing passive discourse was regularly identified in the City of Tampere data. The following excerpt is a revealing example of organisational discourse in which the customer has been hidden and reduced to being a passive actor in systems of the organisations.

Of course systems have been developed. I think there will be these that, do we get what we want and will the customer satisfaction instruments develop in the expected direction. I believe that a big challenge in the future is to develop instruments so that they really serve the system. CH1;Q:63:79

The interviewee gave a future-oriented explanation of how they had developed evaluation systems. He also pondered whether the instruments created to measure customer satisfaction were purposeful or not. He concluded the utterance by referring to the challenge of developing instruments or gauges to serve the system. To 'serve the system' here is interesting, with its organisational or institutional emphasis. The customer was passive and not easily identified as an actor.

The next excerpt represents discourse which revealed an emphasis on the organisational focus. The interviewee was asked about the division of labour between the purchaser and the provider in regard to evaluation practices. She brought up customer inquiries which had

been used in day care, but customers were not given a position of active agents. Rather, the benefits for the purchaser and the provider were emphasised.

I still want to think that it [evaluation] would be kind of covering both sides and that both viewpoints are taken into account. Yeah, yes. Yes, and indeed it provides information both to purchaser and provider for sure. The inquiries, for example, customer inquiries from day care, I think answers can be found for both the purchaser's side and the provider's side. CH6;Q:70:68

In the last example the interviewee memorised what inquiries the city had regularly conducted in order to receive feedback from customers and improve the quality of the services.

And I try to think what else... well different kinds of inquiries, what the purchaser conducts, customer satisfaction inquiries, service flow inquiries, there is parents' participation. CH14;Q:65:146

Compared with the earlier example, customers were more visible in this discourse with a reference to 'parents' participation', but they did not have an active role in the process.

The Finnish Road Administration

During the conducted interviews The Finnish Road Administration was in a process of implementing new procedures to encourage their service providers to innovate and produce good quality products and services. Based on the customers' evaluation and feedback the Finnish Road Administration would pay a bonus to the service providers when they had managed to improve service quality. Thus, it was explained that customers participated in the business and organisation's activity. In the following excerpt of active customer discourse the interviewee described customers' possible actions when assessing services: 'if road users feel' and if they 'indicate this'. Customers were active agents in the process.

That we encourage them to think in what way the product could be better -, well this is connected to quality of course – but if road users feel that now the quality is better and indicate this in our assessments then we would be ready to pay. BH12;Q:48:11

The next example provides an interesting aspect of strengthening customers' influence on services. The interviewee compared quality control on two different motorways and mentioned an example concerning the Lahti motorway.

We talked about quality production, quality, let's say the directing mechanism principle, so on the Lahti motorway the goal was that the road users and their behaviour – do I use this or the other road – created quality pressure for the contractor. BH11;Q:51:28

First, the interviewee explained in the excerpt how customers indirectly by their own actions gave feedback concerning the quality of the roads. Observing specific roads might not necessarily give a reliable explanation for the motive of using them, but a large number of road users can indicate its quality. Second, more interesting in the excerpt was actually the

power given to customers: creating 'quality pressure for the contractor'. Not only can an active agent be identified here, but also an agent with power.

The following excerpt represents passive customer discourse. The interviewee described in which way customer focus was emphasised in the organisation and how systems had been developed to support customer orientation.

But... well locally the customer focus is emphasised. Nowadays is... recently a lot has been developed, these systems, how to develop customership and to manage the customer. (...) That we have satisfaction inquiries, we constantly follow the satisfaction of road users, economic life, this satisfaction and aim to direct actions according to these inquiries. BH7;Q:55:7

Customers were here expressed as passive participants in developing work processes. What is extremely interesting here is how the person brought up 'managing the customers'. An expression such as this refers to customers not having an active position, but something that the organisation has to manage, govern, or even take control over. Compared with the previous excerpt of the active evaluation customer the difference is remarkable: a shift from someone creating quality pressures for the contractor to someone to be mastered.

In the second excerpt the interviewee's talk meandered between quality control and a brain drain from the Finnish Road Administration to service providers. The focus was on evaluation processes instead of customers.

It is understandable that they are business men [service providers] now and sometimes they don't care about small fines at all. Even though fines are to be paid, the roads haven't been in the condition demanded by the quality requirements. Small fines are paid, but 'it is not much, so what!' These private, if I talk outside of the public utility [the Finnish Road Enterprise], they have very well, YIT and NCC and what there are, they have maintained very well there. Of course then men have moved from us to contractors, outsiders. But road management, everyone knows that our feedback channels are full of, also inappropriate feedback, but we take everything and record it and do to them what we can. BH6:Q:44:83

In the beginning the interviewee brought up critical comments concerning private sector service providers, business agents, and their occasional ignorance of quality issues. The interviewee felt that service providers occasionally disregarded their duties and the quality of maintenance despite the financial penalties. The financial penalties, according to him, were not extremely high. Customers' position as evaluators was diminished through the third party, the service providers in the discourse. Later, when the interviewee mentioned possible extensive feedback from customers, the evaluating customers were placed in the background without an active position.

The Helsinki University Library

The City Centre Library data of evaluating customer were rather small, providing only two quotations, both of which were identified as active customer discourse. I provide here one excerpt of the discourse.

The themes of evaluation and feedback processes as such were not emphasised in the interviews in the Helsinki University Library and thus were not discussed to a large extent.

What, instead, became evident were the rather personal relations between some of the librarians and research group customers ('our people'). The customers 'are' and 'give their opinions' expressed customers' active role in library work.

And these our people they are, they give their opinions without asking. And it is possible because of this acquaintance---. b1h;Q:1:17

Close relations between librarians and researchers enabled and facilitated the personal feedback and co-operation at many levels. Without systematic feedback and evaluation tools, however, it would be challenging for the library organisation to provide profound information sharing and guidance throughout the whole library organisation.

8.4. Conceptual framework and the analytical tool for dynamic and stabilising discourse

During the first phase of the analysis I perceived that the evaluation discourse was occasionally disconnected from the actual work context, causing problems and uncertainty at work. I also needed to move toward a more dynamic conceptualisation of the concept of customers. Thus, I returned to the customer as a core of work analysis (Chapter Seven) and modified the analytical tool of stabilising, dynamic, and possibility discourse for the second part of this analysis at hand by removing the possibility category. I made this decision, first, because the data were smaller and did not seem to have a strong emphasis on such discourse. And, second, I tried to avoid creating too fragmented an analysis, which might be difficult to follow.

The stabilising discourse emphasised organisational priorities in which the simplistic idea of customer was presented with formal nominalisation, and decontextualized and temporally minimally located (Berkenkotter & Ravotas, 1997; Sannino, 2010). In the dynamic discourse, contextualized customers were understood as 'real' persons in studied contexts. The organisational priorities were not emphasised and customers were seen as the object of work. Also, an indication of the concrete discourse was the narrative style of talking (Berkenkotter & Ravotas, 1997).

The stabilising and dynamic discourse analytical tool (Table 12) created for the analysis is presented below.

Table 12. Stabilising and dynamic discourse analytical tool

Stabilising discourse (abstract)	Dynamic discourse (concrete)
Formal nominalisation	Narrative style
Classification schemes	Narrative style
Decontextualized and minimally temporal	Temporal, contextual, located
Organisational focus and needs including personnel No possibilities for organisational and customer focus to meet	Customer focus and needs

The objective of the analysis was to analyse whether interviewees talked about their customers as distant and decontextualised actors abstracted from work activities, or as ‘real’ persons who are part of the organisation.

8.5. Dynamic and stabilising customer discourse

The City of Espoo

Typical challenges encountered in contemporary public sector activities concern insufficient resources in service provision, thus calling for new practices and policies to overcome the problems. Elderly care is not an exception.

In the following example of the stabilising customer discourse, the interviewee explained how elderly people are increasingly living at home instead of being taken care of in institutions. She explained that, following the New Public Management ideology, such customers are asked about their possible care needs in order to serve them better at home. However, even though feedback has been recorded, lack of resources means that the organisation cannot respond to customers’ needs. Abstract policies are disconnected from practice and thus in the following excerpt, customers’ position is diminished and buried under an organisational focus.

That now we have to live with it that these people are left or are transferred [home] but then resources are not given to home care, personnel resources, to help these customers. Even though inquiries have been made, concerning those over 75 years old, asking what kind of service they might need at home to manage there. These have been written down, but there are no resources for giving these services. AH8;Q:10:106

The organisational and customer focus did not seem to meet in a satisfactory way, which raised the question of the purpose of evaluations. One can ask what the objective of evaluations is if resources are allocated to conduct evaluation, but not to take concrete actions to respond to the identified needs.

The following example of dynamic customer discourse illustrates a different aspect of the evaluation processes. The interviewee had identified a 'marked' change in the feedback practices in the City of Espoo. Moving from entirely quantitative analyses towards more qualitative ones was considered a positive change. It is also a strong signal of the efforts to develop the evaluation methods towards more customer-oriented practices.

And I think that this is, concerning elderly care, a very marked change. (...) Instead of dealing with customer feedback with numbers and statistics and products of bureaucracy, now they have down to earth goals such as keeping relatives' meetings regularly. AH16;Q:16:59

In the excerpt customers were locally and temporally contextualised and were understood as 'real' persons rather than numbers and figures in a bureaucratic jungle. Thus, this example of the dynamic customer discourse represented a very different approach to customers from the previous one. Here the described change refers to moving toward understanding customers; human beings as the object of work.

The City of Tampere

In the City of Tampere the stabilising customer discourse was dominant. The emphasis was on the challenges of trying to find a satisfactory balance between the focus of customers and the focus of organisations. Difficult customer inquiries were described as a real problem, causing anxiety not only for parents but also for personnel. First, the questions were considered too difficult and subjective. Second, the results remained unclear for personnel, since they were difficult to interpret. Third, implementation and utilisation of the results were not communicated to the personnel, leaving them more or less confused. Similar findings were analysed in the City of Espoo.

It became evident in the City of Tampere that some of the evaluation actions did not seem to benefit either customers or personnel. The following example gives an idea of how customers were given a voice in the evaluation processes: 'only for the fun of asking' referred to processes, not the customers' point of view. It appeared that evaluation and feedback were collected because of implemented rules and not because of the aim to genuinely develop services according to customers' needs.

Well, the parents have always been asked, but only for the fun of asking. CH14;Q:65:54

The second excerpt repeats the challenge or impossibility of the meeting of the organisational focus and customers' needs. Customers were said to have opportunities to give feedback on and evaluate services in order to improve them and to help the organisation be more customer-oriented.

Maybe on the school side we have boxes and things where they can give feedback, but the aim of customer orientation, that is a big aim. I think it is a big step, that, how do we attain it as they don't even listen now. CH15a+b;Q:69:20

Yet, the interviewee did not find it realistic that customers' voices would genuinely be heard despite the various feedback channels. In both of the previous examples the customer as an

evaluator was hidden, raising the question again whether the inquiries were conducted because it was expected or in order to serve customers better. What really is the purpose of giving customers a position of evaluator? According to the New Public Management discourse customers are given such a position, but in the excerpts above the evaluation practices themselves seemed to be abstracted from the whole service practice.

In the following example of dynamic customer discourse in the City of Tampere, customers appeared to be temporally contextualised. The interviewee talked about 'our families' and explained how customers were asked their opinion of services within a certain period of time.

First, we have inquiries for customers, for our families. We have service inquiries, which means that when they come to day care, after a month or two the parents are asked how they feel the customership has started. CH16;Q:72:110

The customer was an active agent in the discourse. The interviewee did not bring up unsatisfactory evaluation procedures as was the case in the stabilising discourse presented above.

The Finnish Road Administration

In the Finnish Road Administration the discourse was thematically focused on the customers' position in evaluation practices and allocation of bonuses for service providers. In the data excerpt of stabilising customer discourse below, the interviewee explained how customer satisfaction inquiries were used to allocate bonuses to service providers who are responsible for road maintenance in specific regions. Customers appeared as invisible evaluators behind bonuses, inquiries, and scales.

And now we have this kind of first report of the regional customer satisfaction bonuses in the areas of management and maintenance contracts. So now we can direct customer satisfaction inquiries so that they can be directed to the specific region where the contractor works. To each contractor region. And in principle the customer satisfaction, if it is higher than the average there, they have a scale, we can pay the contractor a bonus. But not only connected to this, but also to our road managers who are supervisors of the contracts, so their feedback about the quality, too. BH9;Q:49:69

The excerpt also clarified that feedback was collected not only from customers, but also from road managers inside the organisation, which seemed to blur the division of labour in evaluation practices.

The implemented purchaser-provider split had changed the division of labour in the Finnish Road Administration. Reorganisation meant that now service providers had operational responsibility for the quality of road maintenance. The purchaser, however, was responsible for the road management as a whole. Such organisation of production and services meant that customers' feedback and complaints were directed to service providers through the Finnish Road Administration, as explained in the following interview excerpt of dynamic customer discourse.

And the contractor has total responsibility for road maintenance both in winter and in summer. And customers' expectations of better road management, complaints, if the road is in bad condition somewhere, they are directed straight to the contractor. Through our channels, meaning that we have this kind of road user's line where people can call, and from there our traffic centre directs them straight to contractors. BH2:Q:46:7

In the excerpt, customers are contextualised and given the voice and space to express their opinions through the road user's line. The second example continues with the same theme of giving feedback on provided services.

About the winter maintenance comes [feedback] and on Mondays, on winter Mondays. We [ministry] have a kind of general feedback [channel], that comes here and surely for them [FINNRA], too. Mostly it is feedback from road users. But the customers who come for licenses and such, I haven't heard much negative [feedback from them]. But maybe they have started taking better care of them. BH7:Q:47:69

The interviewee from the Ministry of Transport and Communications explained how they received feedback concerning maintenance especially at specific peak times. Customers were brought into the discourse with contextualised and temporal narratives. The interviewee emphasised that the majority of feedback givers were road-users rather than those using the services of authorities. Also, the excerpt provided a future-oriented implication of a change towards better authority services: 'maybe they have started taking better care of them'.

The Helsinki University Library

The Library data were rather small and the analysis provided only two quotations of evaluating customers. Both were identified as dynamic customer discourse. In the example below customers are contextualised within a temporal dimension in regard to a customer satisfaction inquiry. They are also given a voice in the form of a positive message to librarians.

And make the work visible. Just in our user inquiry, published today there was that 'thank you for you for the invisible work'. b4hQ:4:44

Summary

The table below (Table 13) summarises the distribution of the active, passive, stabilising, and dynamic customer discourses.

Table 13. Summary of coded quotations of active, passive, stabilising, and dynamic customer discourses

	Espoo (10)	Tampere (11)	FINNRA (17)	Library (2)	Total (40)
Active	3	3	10	2	18
Passive	7	8	7	-	22
Stabilising	6	9	6	-	21
Dynamic	4	2	11	2	19

The analysis aimed at examining whether customers appear in employees' discourse as active evaluators or as passive and abstract parties having a mechanistic relation to evaluation processes within the organisations.

Table 13 indicates that across the cases, customers as evaluators were quantitatively expressed primarily as passive and abstract customers rather than as active and 'real' agents. There were no substantial differences in the figures, but some variation within the studied organisations was identified when elaborating the findings qualitatively.

In the City of Espoo the findings suggested that passive (6) and stabilising (6) discourses were the dominant discourses expressed by employees. Active (3) and dynamic (4) discourses had a lower number of occurrences. A variety of thematic expressions and linguistic cues were used in the customer discourse. The analysis suggested a balancing between customers (including relatives) as temporally and contextually expressed active quality controllers, and as passive, abstract agents in the evaluation processes. There were signs of a temporal movement from treating customers' feedback as numbers toward more qualitative and practical implementations. In elderly care, however, as explained by an interviewee, customer satisfaction inquiries ultimately could not be used to respond to customers' needs.

The quantitative findings in the City of Tampere resembled those in the City of Espoo. Passive (8) and stabilising (9) discourses were dominant, whereas active (3) and dynamic (2) discourses occurred less frequently. Expressions of customers were identified on the one hand as temporally and contextually located thematically described active agents, and on the other hand as passive customers hidden behind organisational jargon emphasising organisational priorities. The problems described regarding evaluation processes were related to unsatisfactory inquiries and feedback procedures. Customers were not given genuine opportunities to have an influence, and difficult inquiries hindered implementations of feedback.

The findings in the Finnish Road Administration revealed that the quantitatively dominant discourses were active (10) and dynamic (11) customer discourses. Passive (7) and stabilising (6) discourses were the least used in the interviews. Thematic descriptions and temporal and narrative contextualisation were used to express customers as active agents in feedback collection. However, a balancing between active quality controllers and a mass that needs to be mastered by the organisation was identified in the data. Service providers were brought into the discussion as a third party that hindered to a certain extent

customer focus by ignoring implemented bonus systems and their aims toward better quality.

In the Helsinki University Library passive and stabilising customer discourses were absent. There were two occurrences of both active and dynamic discourses. Customers were expressed in the discourse by using thematic descriptions with contextual and temporal narratives. No unsatisfactory evaluation procedures were identified in the interviews, but the need for more systematic evaluation tools was indicated.

8.6. Conclusions

Quantitatively the findings of evaluating customer discourse suggested that customers are understood as passive and abstract agents rather than active and concrete participants in the organisations' practices. Such findings vary from those of the previous analysis of customers as the core of work (Chapter Seven), which was partly explored with similar analytical tools. Qualitatively the findings resemble each other to some extent, and factors such as conflicting situations were identified in both analyses.

The City of Espoo

The principles of quality, evaluations, and customer feedback became an integral part of elderly care in the City of Espoo as late as the 2000s, in accordance with the New Public Management principles. Outsourcing of parts of the service production to private and third sector organisations began to increase, initiating demand and new procedures for evaluating practices. Positive developments in regard to methods of evaluation and feedback were reported, and evaluation procedures were described as fairly established. A change from treating customers' feedback as only numbers towards down-to-earth approaches was seen as positive. The analysed documents indicated a similar change (Chapter Six), which revealed a gradual shift from conceptualising customers in discourse as numbers to conceptualising them as 'real' agents. Such finding suggested a change towards understanding customers as part of the organisation and its practices.

The data, however, illustrated a balancing between customer focus and organisational focus as well as signs of conflicting situations. Evaluations were conducted and customer feedback collected, but occasionally, the organisation did not seem to be able to respond to customers' needs, partly because of a lack of sufficient resources. References to limited resources in public sector organisations hardly surprise anyone today. Such findings, however, revealed the need for developing evaluation practices, or at least better constructing an understanding of how and why the implemented evaluation tools are used. Otherwise the object of using tools is simply the implementation of tools rather than customers and their needs.

The City of Tampere

Customer inquiries entered the day care discourse in the City of Tampere in the 1990s, along with quality and customer discourses adopted from the New Public Management approach. Thus, an increasing variety of inquiry and customer feedback channels and methods were introduced into the day-to-day routines. At the time of the data collection, such tools were widely used and the interviewees recognised their importance for customers and the organisation. However, the employees also described conflicting situations, which revealed

problems in regard to feedback collection. Notable is that such descriptions received substantial emphasis in the City of Tampere in comparison with the other organisations in the study.

The arguments that inquiries were conducted ‘only for fun’ instead of for customers’ benefit, and that they were too difficult not only for customers but also for personnel to understand, referred to the tendency to use customer satisfaction inquiries as a generalised rule rather than a tool to improve services and respond to customers’ needs. Also, doubts expressed about how customer feedback was used to increase customer orientation implied that the customers’ voice was not necessarily heard. The object of evaluation was not the customer, but the feedback itself. Perhaps the implementation of customer inquiries was a top-down process emphasising organisational and management priorities rather than tools to provide better services for customers.

Confusion regarding the division of labour between the purchaser and the provider in evaluation processes was identified in the interviews. The purchaser was responsible for the evaluation, but the person responsible for planning the evaluation worked on the provider’s side. Such blurring may have promoted implementation of impractical inquiries. Generally described confusion is not unusual in purchaser-providers split arrangements in the public sector, especially at the beginning of the change processes (Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009, p. 39).

Considering the large organisational transformation underway in the city, and the appearance of quality and evaluation discourse and practices only a decade or two earlier, identification of conflicting situations is hardly surprising. Future-oriented development of customer satisfaction tools was mentioned, but interestingly, in one interview the objective was argued to be ‘to serve the system’ instead of customers. Balancing between understanding customers as the ‘real’ object of the evaluation processes and as passive agents behind the organisational priorities was identified in the City of Tampere, where conflicting situations were emphasised.

The Finnish Road Administration

The Finnish Road Administration had adopted customer and market-oriented practices earlier than the other organisations studied. Concepts related to evaluation practices, such as customer feedback, customer satisfaction, and quality already appeared in the Finnish Road Administration’s annual reports in the 1990s and since then had been incorporated intensively into the organisation’s strategies and practices. Also, a systematic bonus programme for service providers had been introduced, thus involving customers and service users in quality control and bonus allocation (financial benefits). Such steps referred to aims to conceptualise customers as part of the organisation.

The findings in the Finnish Road Administration revealed a balancing between understanding customers as active agents in evaluation processes (quality controllers), and passive masses which needed to be mastered. The implemented purchaser-provider split and market orientation, for instance, revealed interesting conflicts in the relations between customers, the organisation, and third parties, that is, service providers. After the reorganisation, the Finnish Road Administration had faced a brain drain from the own organisation to the service providers, which was likely to affect know-how and capabilities in the organisation, the quality of purchasing, and ultimately, also customers. More easily identified conflicts were descriptions of service providers’ profit making and how it occasionally hindered good service provision for customers. Profit making (use-value)

conflicted with providing services for customers (exchange value), thus hiding customers and their needs behind service providers' priorities (Engeström, 1987; Miettinen, 2005). Business aims and public sector ethos clashed in the activities of road building, maintenance, and management. Fountain (2001) and Aberbach and Christensen (2005) had expressed their concerns regarding business orientation in public services, since the purpose of business, at least traditionally understood, is to make a profit to satisfy stakeholders.

In my view, the systematically introduced tools in evaluation practices and customer focus had assisted employees to conceptualise their customers as objects of work in the way the New Public Management introduces customers. However, some obstacles related to challenges in the new division of labour were identified outside of the core organisation.

The Helsinki University Library

The New Public Management approach and tools, such as objectively measured service products and quality control, were identified in the descriptions of library work. User inquiries and annual customer satisfaction procedures had been increasingly implemented in the organisation since the 1990s, and intensively since the 2000s. The findings, though based on a very small amount of data, suggested that there was a tendency to understand customers as active participants instead of as a mechanical party of the service provision. Such findings are in parallel with the New Public Management approach and its understanding of customers as active and participatory service-users.

One challenge, however, was identified in the library work. On the one hand, systematic user inquiries and feedback were conducted, but on the other hand, traditional face-to-face feedback giving channels were considered useful. Such mini-scale interaction must not be ignored, but considering the new large library organisation, use of systematic evaluation and feedback procedures need to be prioritised in order to serve customers better on a large scale.

9. POSSIBILITIES OF EXPANSION OF THE CONCEPT OF CUSTOMER

9.1. Expansion of the concept of customer

The recent New Public Management implementations influencing the public sector are claimed to operate at quantitative and qualitative levels. Quantitative change refers to the distribution of the New Public Management initiatives across a number of countries, and qualitative to the diminishing differences between private and public sector employment (Emery & Giauque 2005, p. 643). Also, the initiatives transform the societal division of labour and blur the boundaries between the three sectors: public, private and third sector (Pirkkalainen & Kaatrakoski, 2009). From another perspective the blurring in care provision can occur between four inter-players: state, markets, family, and third sector (Esping-Andersen, 1999; see also Theobald, 2012). Such blurring of sectors between the municipal and family sectors can be identified in the City of Espoo and the City of Tampere. In home care, for instance, employees increasingly negotiate with relatives about responsibilities in care activities. Further, in order to provide good quality services they chart not only the resources of 'actual' customers, but also the resources of their relatives, and thus expand the understanding of the customer. Seppänen, Cerf, and Toiviainen (2013) argued that in networks of social services 'the potential horizon of expansion of the object is the customers' own social networks'.

Further, a public sector customer in the frame of marketisation is claimed to be a service-user whose opportunities to participate and influence have expanded compared to earlier ideas of service-users or citizens. The ideological and theoretical roots of the New Public Management approach can be found in the rational choice theory. Thus, central importance is put on individuals' ability to make rational and well considered decisions based on the information at hand, as well as on freedom of choice. Individuals are also expected to act according to these rationales (Clarke & Newman, 2007; Fountain, 2001; Koskiahio, 2008). Leena Eräsaari (2006, p.7) criticises the approach of rational individuals and argues that if, for instance, customers and future customers of services for alcohol and substance abusers were rational, they ought to call for higher alcohol prices and better preventive care. However, as she pointed out, such a movement has not yet been identified. Brita Koskiahio approaches public sector customers as 'free shoppers', who have free choice and possibilities of shopping for services similarly as in a commercial department store (Koskiahio, 2008). As the following excerpt shows, the freedom of choice was identified in the data of the City of Espoo:

I think that it is great, that we have possibilities to offer, we have a selection of services. That you can take a private company or a public one. And you can complement public services with private services. This service production is organised now in a different way. (...) Entrepreneurs from another city, an entrepreneur called me and asked how to enter our markets. Free markets they can enter, but the skeletal agreement is binding for three years (...) It is great that people who can pay and want to pay to private organisations want to support private service production. And there are excellent service producers. AH 14

From the service providers' viewpoint the idea of free shoppers or free choices generates a new kind of demand for flexibility and readjustment to respond to customers' varying needs. Such demands occasionally create conflicts among participants in service encounters (Newman & Vidler, 2006). Instead of accepting a simplified discourse of choice, some questions need to be asked. For instance, where are customers' needs defined, who defines them, how are the needs of mental patients, drug abusers, dementia patients, and other vulnerable customers defined, and how can the equality of services among vocal and demanding and less vocal and demanding citizens be secured (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005; Koskiahio, 2008)? Also, by providing customers with a position of a free and independent decision maker, organisations and employees have more responsibility for assisting customers to gain such a position when they are exercising actions of independency and autonomy. Employees need tools to be used in service encounters with which they can assist customers to achieve the autonomy they are encouraged to have (Kettunen & Möttönen, 2011, p. 60).

We have learnt so far that customer discourse and the introduction of the concept of customer have become evident in the public sector in Finland along with implementing the New Public Management. The concept itself is multi-dimensional and the discourse has increasingly pointed out the complexity of the concept. It 'has expanded both in terms of the range of services which use the concept and in terms of its depth of influence on the structures, processes and practices through which public services are delivered' (Richter & Cornford, 2008, p. 211).

As indicated earlier, the understanding of customer has expanded from individual customers toward collective ones in terms of customers' needs, possibilities and power. Thus, instead of approaching the topic by examining the blurring of societal sectors in Finland, as was introduced in the beginning, a more relevant aspect in my opinion is to examine how the object of work has expanded and changed. How has the customer as the object of home care, day care, and library as well as road administration work expanded from an individual uniform customer towards a more complex customer? How has the concept of customer as the object of work changed towards a customer with more varied needs and possibilities of influencing the work? Can temporal changes be identified in relation to the changing concept of the customer as object?

9.2. Conceptual framework

I examine the conceptualisation of customer by applying the activity theoretical notion of expansion (Engeström, 1987). I use the conceptual dimensions of social and temporal expansion of customers in accordance with the analyses conducted by Hasu (2000) and Engeström, Puonti, and Seppänen (2003). Hasu (2000) studied the implementation process of a neuromagnetometer device and analysed the data by using the intermediate conceptual dimension of expansion, that is, transformation of an artefact from individual to collective use. The findings were four different dimensions of expansion: social (integration of technologies, enlarging the functional spatial scope of work; 'who else should be included'), anticipatory-temporal (broaden the temporal trajectories of implementation; 'what previous and forthcoming steps should be considered?'), moral ideological (share individual application expertise; who is responsible and who decides?), and systemic-developmental dimensions (support the idea of collective subject; 'how does this shape the future of the activity?').

The topic of Engeström, Puonti and Seppänen (2003) was expansion of objects in areas of economic crime investigations, organic vegetable farming, and medical care. Instead of seeing expansion as a quantitative widening or expansion, they referred to qualitative transformation of the object (*ibid.*, pp. 181 - 182). Their analysis focused on socio-spatial and temporal dimensions of expansion. By socio-spatial expansion they meant, for instance, multiple locations of crime and multiple agencies and multiple inter-connected caregivers. By temporal expansion they referred to long-term crime, farming across the years, and multiple years of care. They argued that expansion of objects in their cases did ‘call for a remediation of place and space’ (*ibid.*, p. 183).

9.3. Analytical tool

Based on the studies presented above I created a tool (see Table 14) for analysing the expanded customer category with social and temporal dimensions. The tool provided the thematic frame for analysing the data.

Table 14. Analytical tool for social and temporal expansion

Social expansion	Temporal expansion
Participation of multiple individuals or organisations representing multiple voices	Temporal tendencies with multiple individuals or organisations
Varied needs of customers	Temporal tendencies with varied customer needs
Multiple opportunities to influence and participate in service production	Temporal tendencies with multiple opportunities to influence and participate in service production

Here, social expansion refers to, for instance, expansion of individual customers towards more collective ones with relatives, personnel, or service providers. It consists of customers’ needs and possibilities for participation in services and service production. The temporal dimension shows movement from past to future, opening up dynamic tendencies and movement towards new potential conceptualisations (see Engeström, Nummijoki, & Sannino, 2012).

The tools provided in the studies of Hasu (2000) and Engeström, Puonti, and Seppänen (2003) were useful for my analysis. First, they shared the idea of approaching social and temporal development in contemporary dynamic organisations by analysing the object of work. Also, the object of work was conceptualised by analysing expansion of the object (*ibid.*, 152). Second, they collected ethnographic data representing real work practices, which resembles the data collected in my study.

My data were dissimilar to those presented above since they did not provide possibilities for me to follow the trajectories of different actors. Instead, my analysis focused on interviewees’ talk in a certain time and place. Also, the temporal dimension was not

identified in the data as such, but instead was merged with the social dimension. However, my decision was to analytically separate temporality from the social dimension in order to provide a more dynamic understanding of the expansion. Further, the temporality was mainly focused on movement from past to present. For instance, interviewees talked about increasing involvement of relatives in caring for the elderly compared with previous years.

9.4. Social and temporal expansion of the concept of customer

The City of Espoo

Social expansion of customers

Home care customers in the City of Espoo were often understood as a network of relatives or other caregivers rather than as individual customers. This finding is hardly surprising, since we are talking about people who may have multiple illnesses and perhaps a variety of incapacibilities. References to relatives' participation in the care were identified in the data on a regular basis. Mainly the references were expressed as a positive dimension in care practices. However, opposing descriptions were also identified. Some customers were described as not having next of kin and some family members were described as not participating in the care activities, as the following example shows. The interviewee called for more active participation of relatives in order to provide the good and satisfactory services for elderly people on which they could all agree.

And the relatives have an important role, because I think that the relatives, at the moment perhaps the relatives are not much involved in the care of some customers. I wish that the relatives would really care about the lovely elderly people more and would be involved. In that sense we see it as important that the relatives are with us in care meetings if they can and want to be. And that way we aim to agree on the care and service plan and act according to that. That all agents know how to act and what the principles are. AH6; Q:8:154

Occasionally, participation of relatives seemed to be problematic for employees. Bringing in multiple voices created conflicting opinions and viewpoints between relatives and caregivers concerning how the care ought to be carried out and organised.

And sometimes they are unsatisfied, mainly the relatives, if we don't clean so well or... We take care of the customer's environment and take out the rubbish and wipe the dust, but we don't do spring cleaning or polish crystal chandeliers, or wash windows. It sometimes creates conflicts like who should do that job. But we have managed to talk and succeeded in solving them by ordering the cleaning from somewhere else. AH3;Q:5:125

The data and the excerpt above revealed the demands expressed by relatives, 'mainly relatives' more than 'actual customers'. Thus, the individual customer who was receiving services stayed in the background. The position of multiple institutional service providers was also mentioned in the discussion.

The conflicts were not limited entirely to customers' needs or hopes and home care and their possibilities of providing services. There were also conflicts between customers and relatives concerning care procedures.

And of course we have to take into account that we can't fulfil all of the customer's wishes. And the fact that customers and relatives think differently about arranging care can create conflicts. Or the customer and nurses think differently about arranging care. The customer thinks that she/he needs home care services, though the services she/he needs are not included in home care, and then there can be conflicts. But that we could get a good compromise and good co-operation, that is essential considering the customer's well-being. AH10;Q:11:85

This could be identified as expansion toward collective customers, expansion of customers' needs, and expansion towards participatory customers. The following excerpt provides a different dimension of participatory customers.

Doctors write medical certificates for customers' transportation support when customers ask for them, even though it is clear that, ahaa, the criteria are not fulfilled. But doctors do what customers ask. And then our employees, home care coordinators, have to tell the customer that the criteria are not fulfilled and you are not allowed the support. These kinds of co-operation and communication. It is kind of wasted work for us, because someone has to go to the customer when doctors write these kinds of medical certificates, and you immediately see that they don't fulfil the criteria. Now, for example, support for transport service. AH6;Q:8:151

The interviewee expressed her concerns that some care professionals in the care system, medical doctors in this example, easily submit to customers' demands. For instance, they write certificates for financial support for customers who are not entitled to receive such support. This as the interviewee explained, is likely to create confusion and an extra work load for home care employees.

Temporal expansion of customer

The temporal expansion was evident in several interviews revealing the dynamics in the concept of customer. In the following excerpt one of the interviewees explained how customers, including relatives, had become more aware of their rights, and were more willing to demand services that they wanted and needed. Here the customer appears as a collective customer, not an individual one. Customers' awareness of increased possibilities of demanding certain services and of taking instantaneous actions in order to receive the needed services showed the temporal expansion in the concept.

Well maybe people's awareness of what they can demand. This is surprising, that now it is the patients and the relatives, they come with an attitude that we complain immediately if we don't get this and that. That has increased. Maybe this is because there has been a lot of negative writing, so they have the attitude that we can demand. AH1;Q:3:56

In the next excerpt the described intensiveness of the co-operation between personnel and relatives, instead of individual customers, revealed the social expansion of the concept. The interviewee explained how they chart the resources of relatives in parallel with charting the resources of customers. Thus, customers together with their relatives were understood as the object of caregivers' work.

Well, I think that the role of relatives has grown. Now it is – earlier the thing was – if the relatives were in contact with us, then we felt that was co-operation. We weren't in contact regularly. But now the customer's relatives are involved from the beginning, from planning to implementation of care. We negotiate about the possibility that the relatives can take care of some part of the entity. And we consider what the possibilities for that are. The same way as the customer's own resources, we think of the relatives' resources. AH15;Q:15:51

The temporality appears in the previous discourse in two ways. First, it appears as movement from past to current 'we weren't in contact regularly. But now the customer's relatives are involved from the beginning'. Second, it appears as a shorter timeline, the participation of relatives from the planning to the implementation of care. This suggests that the object of care work has moved towards expanded customership on two levels.

The discourse in a number of interviews concerned the changing object of care work. The following excerpt provides a revealing example of changes at work and how an unsatisfactory division of labour has become a burden for home care managers in their work. The interviewee explained how she, as a manager, used to have more time to support personnel in dealing with challenging customers and their relatives. At the time of the interview she described the work as increasingly secretarial work, such as writing letters of appointment. Temporality was conveyed here in relation to the character of care work, but also as a movement from past to present in regard to challenging cases. She also explained how difficult customer cases in home care often concerned communicating with relatives 'today'.

As I said, it [core of work] has changed enormously. Earlier I had more time for personnel and even had opportunities to participate in interacting with customers, maybe even more with relatives and support personnel. Facilitate a little of the pressure of their work. Of course I still do it, even though there isn't enough time, but then I have to work overtime. But there are cases where I have to be involved. The most challenging ones that I can't leave for care personnel. And very often it concerns relatives... today. There is more secretarial work, very clearly writing, writing letters of appointment which takes a lot of time. It has changed very much. AH1;Q:3:37

The discourse of increasing numbers of customers with multiple illnesses in home care was identified on a regular basis in the interviews. The following three excerpts provide an insight into the discourse showing a temporal expansion of customers. In this analysis customers with multiple illnesses were conceptualised as expanded customers. The first example also illustrates the changed object of care work, and shows the future oriented dimension of temporality, continuity, and movement in the care path: customers stay at home as long as possible.

Well at least that, even though I said that we don't interfere in medical work, but the old people living at home do indeed need more help than earlier. They are, if I may say, hard to take care of. Some of them are in bed and need a lifting apparatus when moving. And some people need help when moving from bed to wheel chair. Because the growing aim has been to keep customers at home – sometimes against customers' own will – as long as possible. It is cheaper for society and for sure most of them want to be at home, but there are those who feel unsafe and would rather be in a sheltered home or institution with 24-hour care. Just that we need to be more alert there, to recognise a customer's condition. That if there are changes, you can call for help, to hospital numbers and 112. We deal with people who have multiple diseases in their homes, even though we don't give medical care. AH8;Q:10:104

The strategic aim of encouraging customers to stay at home as long as possible is common in contemporary social and health care in the public sector. This is resulting in the increase of home care customers with multiple illnesses. The interviewee discreetly expressed her criticism concerning such development. She emphasised that not all customers voluntarily want to stay at home 'as long as possible', but instead may be willing to have 24-hour care. Her conclusion seemed to be that working with these new kinds of customers had changed the character of caregivers' work. It had become more challenging and called for different kinds of competence at work.

The second example of expanded customer with multiple illnesses was a similar discourse to the previous one, showing the temporal development in care paths. The interviewee explained that earlier customers went to the hospital only for short periods, but due to the increase of customers with multiple illnesses the periods have become longer. The future orientation is also expressed in the discourse.

Earlier they had fewer diseases and they came for short care periods and then went back. Now we have patients with multiple illnesses, very ill patients. There has been a big change. And I think that will increase. Now the trend is that more services are given at home. And the aim is that the patient can be at home as long as possible and as long as she/he wants to. Of course there are limits, but that is the aim. Then of course when the patient comes to the hospital, she/he is more ill and needs more help than earlier. AH1;Q:3:93

In the third example one of the interviewees analysed the development in the number of customers with multiple illnesses by emphasising how profound the change was. She explained that the new kind of customership is not a short term trend, but a continuum in home care activities.

And then customership; there are some smaller kinds of trends, that there are more customers with multiple diseases. It is not a turning point, it is a continuum. AH12;Q13:1

The third dimension of temporality is the movement between generations. One interviewee considered 'quiet' and 'elderly people satisfied with everything' as 'disappearing natural resources'.

The situation has changed and is changing, that when the number of elderly people increases, the level of education rises and so on. And then these kinds of quiet elderly people satisfied with everything are disappearing natural resources. It kind of raises the standard of demands. But also the other way around, the possibilities of functioning and influencing one's own life are different from what they used to be, for example, for my grandmother and grandfather. My parents already have a different situation than they had. AH12;Q13:87

The interviewee also reflected on her own and her family's life and the expansion of customers' needs and increasing opportunities to have an influence. Further, the movement from past to future was evident when the interviewee explained how the 'situation has changed and is changing'; the number of participatory and influential customers will grow in the future.

The City of Tampere

Social expansion of the customer

In the day care context the concept of customer has historically changed from working mothers to children, and later, families. When providing services for under age children, the participation of parents or other guardians in care practices is a prerequisite for such activity. In regard to the social expansion of customers, another dimension of expansion was identified in the City of Tampere data. In the following excerpt a day care centre manager described how she understands herself as working in customer service. In addition to children with families as customers, she also referred to understanding the personnel as her customers.

N2: That customer orientation, it is of course, I mean I feel that my task specifically is that I am here in customer service

N1: Yes.

N2: Both internal customers and external, meaning...

N1: Yes, ok.

N2: children and their families and then also our employees; they are in a sense also our customers, even though they are our employees. CH7;Q:60:24

Conceptualising the personnel as customers adds a novel and interesting aspect to the concept of customer by locating customers across the boundaries of different parties in service provision. A similar understanding of personnel was also identified in the City of Espoo data.

The following excerpt shows another dimension of the expansion of customers: participatory citizens. It seems that emphasising participating citizens and creating forums where citizens can have an influence are typical strategic aims in the contemporary public sector; these originate in the ideology of democracy (see Kettunen & Möttönen, 2011, pp. 57-58).

When one part of the new management model is probably also this kind of development of a forum for citizens. That we listen to them more carefully. That we are there sensing what they think. So that we in the whirls of administrative change remember to listen to the citizens, that we don't start aiming towards too much efficiency and saving money. There is in my branch this kind of creating rather big units and... and ... and we have to get financial savings, efficiency on the premises and so on. There is the fear that of course that quality will suffer. CH6;Q:70:64

In the excerpt the interviewee expressed clearly the idea of customers' or citizens' possibilities for participation through citizen forums. She especially emphasised the importance of keeping the customer focus during the large administrative and organisational changes underway in the city. However, balancing between customer focus and costs savings in regard to larger organisational units, for instance, seemed to be likely to create challenges for a customer approach in practice.

The third example continues with the same theme: participation and influence of citizens or customers. The interviewee explained how, in parallel with the New Management Model, process thinking in service production was likely to make services more transparent and reliable for customers. Further, he brought up the idea of customers as active actors expanding their own actions, thus having a specific role in the service production.

And that we support the evaluation of our own success in the process description. So that it is relevant and clear, the process description that we find the key points to evaluate, from the viewpoint of success. This is probably residents' ... I hope that residents get more transparent, reliable but also services where she/he has a clear role as an agent, in relation to the whole, has an influence on the service unity. CH16;Q:72:4

In the fourth excerpt the same theme is repeated. The interviewee explained how the customers' actions and influence on service provision had been expanding.

The receiver or customer of any municipal service is not only a receiver but also part of the solution, solution of the service. We are not just giving, but that the new thinking starts from that the service receiver is part of building the service. And this kind of top-down should be changed to partnership, so that in health care the patient has a big role in whether we succeed in the care. And, on the other hand, a child has a big role and a family has a big role in whether we succeed in education and teaching. And this participation has to be thought of in this way. The kind of partnership viewpoint. And then I see that if we succeed in letting customers participate in the right way to solve the problems and challenges that brings new value. CH16;Q:72:114

He repeated the idea that a public sector customer is not only a service receiver, but 'a part of the solution' of services. The city should not be understood only as a service provider, but a co-operator with customers whose position has expanded toward being increasingly influential agents. The interviewee criticised the traditional top-down management style in health care, which should be developed more toward partnership with customers and enabling and expanding customers' participation. In the school and day care context he emphasised the roles of children and parents in regard to successful upbringing and education. In his view, participating customers would create additional value when solving

problems in service provision. The last excerpt gives a slightly different and critical perspective on the idea of participating customers.

So that parents are very active, (...). They could decide that I had to stay there. And then I was very angry; on the other hand I opposed it that some people can... but then we are the city's property and they can do this kind of thing to us. CH11a+b;Q:59:157

The interviewee described how a recruitment process, in which the interviewee had been involved in, had proceeded in the City of Tampere. In this case, customers were able to influence the process, which instead of being experienced as positive created negative feelings for the interviewee. The interviewee very radically expressed the viewpoint that employees were property of the city without the possibility of influencing certain decisions. Here, the customers' actions were expanded, but at the same time the personnel's actions were narrowed.

Temporal expansion of customer

The first excerpt below repeats an earlier introduced conceptualisation of customers as a family. Also, it reveals that the interviewee had adopted the typical New Public Management discourse of partnership between parents and the day care centre workers. With partnership she referred to increasing communication and co-operation between families and personnel.

And kind of it, that it is not only the child who is our customer, but the whole family. So... let's say that we increasingly have a lot of educational partnership meaning a lot of interaction with the mother and father of the family. Nowadays, however, there is a lot of unawareness about things. So that the families ask questions and we must give the right answer that yes, sometimes a day off is good for children. This is a very simple example, but still! CH17;Q:62:98

The following interviewee explained how the City of Tampere had consciously begun to educate children towards a new kind of participatory citizenship. She reflected on the idea of the new citizenship in her own childhood when such aims were not expressed or did not exist.

N2: Now it is a lovely thing, the participation of children, that the city of Tampere has... it was probably a year ago published in a booklet. And that we are consciously educating new kinds of participatory Tampere citizens.

N1: Yes.

N2: And it is different from how I grew up.

N1: Yes.

N2: It wasn't like that I may have become something like that. But now it is in education and children are taught differently at school. And that we have to keep in mind in our work. CH10;Q:58:30

The temporal movement between generations and from past to future was identified in the excerpt. The interviewee explained that changes in citizenship were initiated by teaching

methods in education. Notable is that new kinds of customers were not explained to initiate changes in citizenship, but also in teaching methods in education. Changes in the object of educational practices had initiated changes in the tools used.

Since one of the strategic goals in the City of Tampere was strengthening citizens' power, the theme was expected to be mentioned in the interviews. In the following example the interviewee clearly expected that the concept of an expanded customer with multiple opportunities to have an influence would materialise. She explained that such a trend could already be recognised. Still, she expected the benefits to be more evident in the near future. A future-oriented temporality was dominant in the excerpt.

And now if I think of the point of view of citizens, I see very clearly that the possibilities for more influence will get better through this [purchaser-provider split]. And that getting information and decision making will be more transparent for citizens. Citizens have a clear role here, in the purchaser-provider split. That the elected officials and citizens are heard and there are citizens' forums. It is clearly evident. But I don't think it is visible yet. That it will be visible in the long run, let's say in four of five years... if the benefits become visible. CH4;Q:66:4

Possibilities for customers or citizens to influence and participate in decision making did not seem to be obvious to everyone. In the following excerpt the interviewee expressed her opinion that citizens actually had no influence on the implemented purchaser-provider split in the City of Tampere. Despite efforts the city had made to facilitate interaction between citizens and administration, such improvement, according to the interviewee, had not always been successful. She also gave an example of how some years earlier the catering services in the city were reorganised and a new public utility, Tampereen Ateria, was established. Here, according to the interviewee, the expansion of the customer concept was not realised, but rather diminished, since customers' or citizens' opinions were not taken into account. The temporality from past to future was evident, but the movement toward better customer orientation was questionable.

But somehow it feels like the inhabitants were not given a possibility for influencing the purchaser-provider split. That is my opinion that generally the change was informed: now this kind of change has happened. That it didn't include interaction and working together. Though, generally I think that Tampere has aimed at that with various projects and so on, to increase the interaction that Tampere inhabitants could influence decisions. But I don't think this happens in the end. Decisions are made and then we are told that this has happened, that we have accepted Tampereen Ateria and so. CH15a+b;Q:69:13

In the fourth excerpt the temporal dimension was brought into the discourse. The interviewee talked about a change toward more participatory parents in the day care context. Parents were described as very active and likely to call and visit day care centres prior to making decisions about which day care centre to choose. The interviewee considered this a positive change. The temporal movement appeared in relation to different generations and the movement from past to present.

Let's say that it has changed very much if I compare my own experience and the span [of time]. Parents call and visit the day care centres without children. I think it is a very good and important thing, of course, to know where you are putting your child! CH17;Q:62:90

The data contained some critical speech turns concerning customers' opportunities to participate in service production. In the following excerpt two interviewees discussed parents' influence on the organisation of work.

N3: And again we listen to parents that they don't want to ... I think it is lovely that we serve and listen to ... Such flexibility has appeared I think. Nor can we ask anymore; precise information can't be requested ... children's parents' holidays, nothing. Sometimes it feels like, 'help'! Because nothing can be requested anymore: 'When will they be picked up?' or 'When will they come?' or 'When are they on holiday?' We are like scouts, always pulled in different directions.

N1: Yes.

N3: Even if we were.... Sometimes it can be done, but then kind of.... always comes.

N2: Too much is too much.

N3: Sometimes drawing the line...

N1: Yes, when it can be drawn?

N3: Yes, when the line does come, where...

(...)

N3: Yes. No, we always have to be more flexible, to work from morning to evening, and to balance when we have time to balance. CH11a+b;Q:59:36

One of the interviewees explained how parents can influence arrangements concerning their children's care during the summer. She used the word 'again', meaning that such exercise of power was continuous rather than coincidental. The consequence for the personnel was that they needed to be increasingly flexible and responsive to customers' requirements, which seemed to create anxiety among the personnel. The interviewee considered customer orientation as a positive aspect, but felt that when parents have more influence, at the same time the personnel's actions are more restricted. She also used the word 'anymore', revealing that earlier they were more equal with parents, but that this equality had changed. The personnel were not to make requests concerning parents' holidays or when the children would be picked up. She saw themselves as 'scouts', always flexible and ready to adjust their timetables according to parents' wants and needs. Thus, the interviewee was calling for lines or boundaries in their flexibility and responsiveness. Here the expansion of customers' actions was narrowing the personnel's control over their own work. The temporal dimension appeared as a movement from past to present to future: 'nor can we ask anymore', 'when the line does come', and 'to balance when we have time to balance'.

Another interview from a different unit revealed a similar uncertainty regarding responsibilities and boundaries in the exercise of individual power.

Yes and then as it is not only, that we don't have just two families as customers, but we have hundreds of families. Where do we draw the line? CH14:Q:65:61

She explained how some parents with strong opinions and an awareness of methods of influence had radically affected the organisation of care activities. According to the interviewee they seemed to act in their own interest and had been successful in their actions. In the previous excerpt the interviewee called for setting boundaries in the personnel's flexibility and responsiveness. Here, the interviewee was calling for boundaries in the responsibilities and influence of parents. 'That when does the line come' shows the future orientation.

The Finnish Road Administration

Social expansion of customer

At the time of the interviews the Finnish Road Administration was in a process of introducing the approach of road users as their customers, the object of their work. The next excerpt provides an example of a description of how the organisation extended the boundaries of customership from an individual road-user to collective road-user representatives.

That we have very important, as I talked earlier about customers, so for example we have the Finnish Truck Association and the Finnish Bus and Coach Association, which are national organisations. We take care of contacts at the national and local level. BH5;Q:50:138

The interviewee brought up the importance of local users as well as their knowledge and opinions, but also the contribution of associations representing the national level. The next excerpt shows an interesting additional dimension to the concept of customer.

We operate the same way with service producers and also with customers, and it is uniform. BH5;Q:50:26

Here the interviewee paralleled service producers and customers, and explained how they were treated in the same way. I assume that the purpose of the speaker was not to consider service producers as the same as customers or customers as the same as service producers. However, the excerpt provided an important aspect suggesting that they are both the object of their work in a similar way. Expanding the understanding of customers was identified here. Also, the concept of customer seemed to blur with service providers in either the private or the third sector.

Temporal expansion of customer

The characteristics of the social expansion of customer in the following example are similar to those in an earlier speech turn (BH5;Q:50:138). The interviewee described how groups of customers representing multiple voices (such as associations, police force, village committees) participated in the planning phase of service production. Interestingly, the excerpt also repeated discourse similar to the previous related speech turn: participation of national and local level actors. Temporality and future orientation can be identified referring to a dynamic conceptualisation of the concept.

When we prepare, for example, a coming regional piecework, then there are drivers of heavy traffic, coach drivers, and local police from the area. The managers invite them to meetings and they go through problematic places in the area and if there is something special that needs special arrangements. In addition, as an experiment in my area we have this, we arrange meetings with village committees and they can tell about problems they have observed: If one road needs earlier ploughing and these kinds of things. And then we have associations, mainly the Finnish Bus and Coach Association and the Finnish Truck Association and we discuss and define policies at the national level, but we also need local knowledge. And through that we collect information, we do annual customer satisfaction inquiries concerning summer and winter. BH2;Q:46:41

The last excerpt focuses on the temporal dimension. The interviewee explained that ‘the customers’ point of view has been emphasised’ and ‘is more emphasised than earlier’. Interestingly, he also pondered that the customer focus might have been in their strategies earlier, but they had not been aware of it. The temporal dimension brings up the movement from past to present in regard to the customer focus.

Indeed the customers’ point of view has been emphasised, meaning the road users, car drivers, professional drivers, private drivers and needs of economic life. And this is more emphasised than earlier. And perhaps they have been there before, but we didn’t talk about them, maybe they were taken care of in practice. BH7;Q:55:20

The City Centre Campus Library

Social expansion of customer

In the Helsinki University Library data the thematic description of social expansion of customers concerned fragmented and/or multiple needs of customers. The needs were, for instance, initiated by interdisciplinary and internationalisation of research work, and by the varied needs of different customer generations.

In the first excerpt the interviewee described the character of research and large research projects and how they could be divided into smaller units. Thus, researcher customers of such projects might have different goals in acquiring information, but they worked on the same challenge.

And then there are larger research projects, and they are in this area often divided into smaller separate questions that can be quite different. So you don’t always know-- one customer after the other may be researchers from the same project, but you can’t guess that they are researchers in the same project, because their slice is so different from the others. b1h;Q:1:28

The expansion of customers and the different goals of researchers created challenges for library professionals to understand customers as a whole. Customers and their needs as an easily recognised unity had become more difficult along with ‘fragmented customership’.

Increasing digitisation of library products with e-libraries and e-materials had affected

library customers' service needs. Researchers, for instance, were described as expecting to receive fast and easy deliveries of e-materials directly to their office. This, however, was not possible with current library tools. Here customers' needs were expanded with a vision that librarians could not fulfil.

This kind of promise of an e-data packet and a virtual world where a researcher can work. It has been rooted... well I am not quite sure about this, but this is my intuition that it has been rooted in researchers' and the personnel's heads. So that now we have the e-library and here we find everything. And then they contact us, that find me those articles, they are in e-format. And they should come to their desktops. And I say that -- just a moment -- that let's wait a while. That I have to dig into this thing and then build it up as a whole. And possibly you have to come and visit me physically. That I can't deliver it to your desktop. These kinds of challenges are connected to the material. That maybe the reality doesn't correspond with the vision that the researchers have in their heads, of how much material they can get. B3h;Q:3:37

Not only digitisation, but also internationalisation of library customers' work had expanded customers' needs. The interviewee in the following excerpt explained how especially young researchers must or want to collect international credits by publishing in international peer-reviewed journals.

In that sense yes, that our young researchers are enthusiastic or even if they are not enthusiastic they have to collect international credits. Meaning international refereed publications --- all this kind of thing. That then through this it [internationalisation] is visible to us, too. b1h;Q:1:23

Universities had also started following the New Public Management ideology, and thus put emphasis on quantitatively easily measurable end-products, for instance, in the number of publications. Such accountability and productivity demands had multiplied researchers' needs for publishing, especially in high-quality international journals. Since academic libraries work closely with universities, the objectives of academic publishing have understandably affected library professionals' work and initiated demands to develop new services.

In the Helsinki University Library data one dimension of the temporal expansion of customers was identified as the increasing needs of customers looking for 'something that doesn't exist yet'. This, as one interviewee pondered, was related to the increasingly interdisciplinary character of research work.

Well more like this kind of... more or less finding existing research is, as a matter of fact, a piece of cake, if it exists. Then we are in trouble if we are asked something that doesn't exist. And I think that this kind of, what isn't there yet, they are increasing due to interdisciplinarity. b1h;Q:1:7

The temporal expansion had a future-oriented emphasis, revealing the dynamics in the customer approach. The excerpt also provides an excellent example of the changing object of library work and how it needs to be re-constructed and co-constructed with customers (Engeström, Rantavuori & Kerosuo, 2013).

Another example of serving customers increasingly with a need ‘that doesn’t exist yet’ concerns, for instance, bibliometric analyses. The interviewee who served educational sciences explained that their customers increasingly wanted to know about the ‘top journals’ of their discipline as well as the impact factors of the journals. He stated that customers follow the procedures in the sciences of technology and medicine and believe that the same methods are used in the educational sciences, which is not the case. The temporality concerned the movement from past to present with reference to the future: ‘we don’t have these in education yet’.

Another more specific question is, in the area of education we are asked questions we haven’t had before, we have had no need to answer or we haven’t been asked so much. For example, the top journals of the discipline. ‘Give me the top journals in my discipline, education, so I know where it is worth publishing my own article, where I get the most merits’. And, on the whole, impact factors and these citation analyses and so – how would I say – bibliometric analyses. This has increased. And in the same way we have a couple of people who clearly have taken their cue from the technical, medical and bio sciences. So they have a good system for these, impact factors and others, so they can put their journals in order. They can talk about them-- or they can get material from the library about it. Then I just have to put up my hand and say that we don’t have these in education yet. b3h;Q:3:37

In the following example the same interviewee described how customers’ needs have changed and how the change has affected library work and training methods.

Well, first of all it took some time for me to understand what they [customers] meant by saying that we in the library should be able to offer a possibility for creating That when a researcher starts doing research she/he has to study some question thoroughly. It is an empty paper she/he starts from. I was a long time that for god’s sake; if a researcher has decided to study something she/he must know something about it! But in fact, it doesn’t go like that. She/he needs tools for creating. It is very difficult for us to start by using Helka [a database]; instead, some Google and Google Scholar especially [are better to start with]. It has occurred to me that if we want to get ideas about a single theme that we know nothing about, it is much easier to use Google and check, or Google Scholar and check what has been written about this, who might have written about this. B3h;Q:3:38

Earlier, as he explained, he assumed that customers come to the library with more or less a developed idea of their research subject. But he had realised that this is no longer the case. Instead, customers may expect more support in creating and initiating their study, instead of starting with a preliminary draft of research. A movement from past to present in relation to the expanded needs of customers was identified here.

New technologies and digital materials have increasingly provided new opportunities for library customers to use library services (Brindley 2007). This seems to have expanded the boundaries of customership in academic library work.

That we do have, if we think of, for example, researcher generations, how many different generations there are at the university at the moment, so there are very different kinds of users. Quite many of them surely would like to take a printed book and read it. b2h;Q:2:12

The object of library work includes ‘traditional’ customers who prefer reading paper prints, but also increasingly a new generation that has adopted use of e-material. As the interviewee explained, different researcher generations with different needs are present simultaneously.

The last example connects customers and their needs to the library tools and how the use of tools is likely to change in the future.

Even if we talked about the same things as earlier, like teaching source criticism. Or I don’t know if has it been taught very much in the library, but anyway enhancing it and teaching critical thinking in information acquisition training, that is the thing. We can’t teach anymore just tools. Because if we go twenty, thirty years ahead, all the time younger and younger students can use them better than we can. B3h;Q:3:43

The librarian explained that information literacy and source criticism are becoming more essential in information acquisition training for customers. He felt that arranging, for example, training for young customers to use library tools might not be necessary or relevant in the future. Such an argument was based on his understanding of younger generations more capable and skilled to use various e-tools than library professionals. Future orientation was emphasised in the excerpt.

Summary

Table 15 presents the distribution of coded quotations of social and temporal expansion of customers in each organisation.

Table 15. The distribution of coded quotations of social and temporal expansion of customers in each studied organisation

	Espoo	Tampere	FINNRA	Library	Total
Social	24	20	2	7	53
Temporal	29	13	2	9	53
Total	53	33	4	16	106

Quantitative calculations showed that the total number of quotations of expanded customers was 106, of which 53 quotations were identified as socially expanded and 53 as temporally expanded customers. The City of Espoo and the City of Tampere had considerably higher numbers of quotations regarding expansion of customers than the Finnish Administration and the Helsinki University Library.

The City of Espoo had the highest number of quotations (53) regarding social (24) and temporal (29) expansion of customers. Social expansion was expressed by interviewees in a multidimensional way as: expansion of individuals towards the collective, including

families and relatives, multiple possibilities for customers to participate in and influence service provision, and the varied needs of customers due to multiple illnesses. Conflicting situations in service encounters were reported as happening on a regular basis between customers and relatives, customers and caregivers, and relatives and caregivers.

Temporal expansion was identified as: movement from past to present to future, movement between different customer generations, and movement on the care path between short-term and long-term care periods. Multiple service providers were identified in the discourse, but were not included in the analysis due to the design of this research. In the pre-analysis, quotations concerning multiple service providers were included in a category which was analysed in this chapter. Had the quotations been included in the analysis, expansion might have brought an additional dimension to the temporality and change between short-term and long-term contracting (see Engeström et al., 2003).

The number of identified expansion of customer quotations in the City of Tampere was the second highest (33), of which 20 referred to social expansion and 13 to temporal expansion. Social expansion was conveyed as the expansion of individuals towards a more collective unit including families and parents, multiple possibilities for customers and citizens to participate in and influence service provision, and personnel as customers. Temporal expansion was identified as movement from past to present to future, and movement between different customer generations. Increased participation of customers had initiated conflicting situations in service encounters between customers and personnel.

In the Finnish Road Administration only four quotations regarding expansion of customers were identified. Social expansion (two) was realised as: expansion of road user customers towards multiple customer groups, such as road user associations and expansion of customers to service providers. The latter finding was not, however, very clearly identified. Temporal expansion (two) of customers was expressed as movement from past to present and to future. It is notable that no conflicting situations were identified in the Finnish Road Administration data.

The Helsinki University Library data were rather small, but 16 quotations were identified as representing expansion of customers. Social expansion of customers (seven) occurred in the City Campus Library in two ways: varied needs of customers and fragmented customers. Temporal expansion (nine) was conveyed as: movement from past to present to future and movement between different customer generations. In the library data conflicting situation were identified as customers' expectations that could not be fulfilled.

The table 16 summarises the findings of the possibilities of expanding the concept of customer analysis.

Table 16. Possibilities of expansion of the concept of customer in each studied organisation

	Espoo	Tampere	FINNRA	Library
Social expansion	Participation of relatives in care Influence and participation in service production Varied needs of customer due to multiple illnesses	Participation of families in day care and school activities Influence and participation of customers in service production Personnel as customers	Expansion of road user customers to multiple customer groups Expansion of customers to service providers	Varied needs of customers due to digitalisation, interdisciplinarity and internationalisation Fragmented customership
Temporal expansion	Movement from past to present to future Movement between different customer generations Movement on care path between short-term and long-term care periods	Movement from past to present to future Movement between different customer generations	Movement from past to present to future	Movement from past to present to future Movement between different customer generations

9.5. Conclusions

The City of Espoo

The findings in the City of Espoo suggested that co-operation and participation of relatives in care practices had increased, and changed from being in contact with relatives to more active communication and participation already from the beginning of the care path. Looking back in history, a movement of policies connecting and disconnecting elderly people and families can be identified. Starting from the 1920s, aims increasingly emphasised connecting them, whereas in the 1960s and 1970s, legislation and the political atmosphere supported the separation of elderly people from their families by removing care duties from children. Later, in the 1980s, humanistic values as well as the New Public Management ideology emphasised customers and relatives as active participants in care giving practices. Yet, in the analysed Annual Reports of the City of Espoo the idea of a collective customer was not identified until the 2000s. In the conducted interviews, conceptualising of customers as collective was identified. Such a movement followed

national and international trends, but it was not expressed as a seamless one. A variety of tensions and conflicting situations were described as occurring in service encounters on a regular basis.

It is also notable that in addition to the expansion of the customer concept towards collective customers, a stabilised or opposite view of such a movement was also identified. More participation from families and relatives was called for in order to provide better service. Thus, the dynamics of the customer concept were illustrated not only by conflicting situations, but also by a dimension of stabilisation.

An increase in the number of demanding and influential customers, both individual and collective, was identified in the City of Espoo. One of the interviewees linked such development to the higher education level of contemporary elderly people, which had initiated a new, informed elderly care customer generation. Such a connection seems adequate, but based on a historical analysis of elderly care in Finland and in the City of Espoo this development also seems connected to the individualistic values, self-determination principles, and customer orientation that were introduced to the public sector by the New Public Management ideology. The findings in the analysed documents of the City of Espoo suggested that the customer focus with active, influential, and independent customer discourse developed gradually from the 1980s to the 2000s. Customers' position as evaluators received emphasis, providing them, at least in discourse, the responsibilities and rights to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction in a systematic way. The interviews, however, also pointed out that the service provision system was not necessarily ready for such a change.

The varied needs of customers as an indication of expanded customers were closely linked to short and long term care. From the time of the interviews until today the public sector has encountered financial pressures forcing it to rationalise its activities. New strategies in the area of elderly care have directed service production towards home care rather than hospitals or other care institutions. The discourse of 'staying at home as long as possible' was identified in the interviews on a regular basis. The new strategy has created a new kind of customer group in home care, customers with multiple illnesses and customers needing more intensive care. The idea itself is humane, since, on the one hand, authorities want to provide possibilities for elderly people to stay at home rather than in institutions. On the other hand, it is about cost savings. Further, the strategic aims are likely to be unfavourable to some customers by encouraging them to live in their own homes as active and independent customers against their own will. The increase in the number of customers with multiple diseases is a continuum, as one interviewee argued, which creates demands for learning new skills and competences, for instance, in the field of care work.

Finally, I refer to Engeström, Puonti, and Seppänen (2003, p. 175), who argue that traditionally the object of medical work is a patient visit, which from an administrative point of view is an easily standardised unit. However, expansion of customers in elderly care, for instance, calls for a redefinition of customers and conceptualising them from a wider perspective. Elderly care customers cannot be conceptualised by locating them in a 'spatially closed box' (*ibid.*, p. 177). The position of the next of kin as well as the enhanced possibilities and needs of home care customers all should be given careful consideration. To sum up, the object of elderly care was described as having changed. It was no longer taking care of homes, but taking care of people, customers. Also, the character of the work of home care managers had increasingly become office and secretarial work, which meant less time for supporting employees and, through that, serving customers better. The tensions

identified between customers and their relatives, customers and caregivers, relatives and caregivers, and also between different professionals in care practices suggested that customer strategies were not in accordance with grass-root experiences. There was need for learning, both for management and grass-root workers.

The City of Tampere

In the City of Tampere the expansion towards collective customers was identified as offering more guiding and supportive ways of working together with families. For instance, developing an educational partnership with parents was regularly brought to the discourse. Educational partnership discourse reflected on strategies introduced at the national and city levels some years prior to the interviews. An increase in participation of customers was also expressed, as well as the possibilities for customers and citizens to influence service production at several levels. Phrases, such as ‘by being part of the solution’ and ‘given a big role in the creation of service innovations’ were used by the interviewees.

However, intentions of implemented strategies and positive discourses were contested by conflicting situations identified in the data. Occasionally, the top-down conceptualising of customers and practice clashed, creating tensions for those working in the field with customers. For instance, increased participation of customers was sometimes considered as irresponsible, and as putting pressure on the personnel to be even more flexible, or as causing inconvenience for other customers. Boundaries between flexibility and responsiveness and between customers and personnel were blurred. Also, claims that citizens were not genuinely able to influence decision making, for instance, in implementation of the purchaser-provider split, were expressed. The findings suggested a need for learning, not only for management and employees, but also for customers.

A future-oriented temporal expansion of customers (children as new participatory citizens) was identified in the data, but this study could not follow and report on how this might have been realised in practice. Such thinking had changed teaching methods in the day care context and may initiate a change in customer thinking in the future. The idea of customers and citizens is likely to conflict with the public sector service provision.

The final observation regarding the social expansion of the customer concept is the novel understanding of personnel as customers. It implied that the concept of customer is dynamic and not as clear-cut as one might think. Interestingly, a similar finding was identified in the data of the City of Espoo (Chapter seven). I did not expect such a conceptualisation, nor did I find it in the historical documents analysed. However, Paul du Gay (1996) introduced a similar idea decades ago when elaborating the culture of customers and enterprise culture in organisational settings.

Regarding the context of the findings of conflicting situations in the historical phase of the City of Tampere, it can be argued that the extensive New Public Management implementations and the pilot period underway in the city during the interviews explain to some extent the reported conflicts. The interviewees were in the middle of transformation, which, they explained, was introduced as a top-down process to some extent. Employees were struggling with a new kind of object of work, new customers, yet did not have the tools to respond to customers’ needs and demands in a satisfactory way. The personnel’s actions were narrowed when customers’ actions were expanded in service encounters. Thus, the discourse of customer orientation could not always be realised, and the concept itself remained abstracted from practice.

The Finnish Road Administration

As of the 1990s, the Finnish Road Administration had intensively introduced strategic goals, which included increasing customer focus and understanding road-users as customers. Tools, such as the Service Commitment and the Customer Strategy were implemented to support day-to-day work. The conceptualisation of participatory customers was also identified in the analysed documents. Thus, the organisation had put a vast amount of effort to move towards a corporate style culture, including a reconceptualisation of the concept of customer. Such aims were also identified in descriptions of customers in the interviews.

The findings suggested movement toward more customer-oriented activities in the Finnish Road Administration. The movement was neatly explained by referring to an increased emphasis on customers' needs and a comparison with an earlier approach in which customers were served 'in an invisible' way. Taking into consideration the strategic changes which occurred in the Finnish Road Administration, the temporal development in customer conceptualising seemed to accord with the strategies implemented.

Expansion of customers toward a variety of customer groups was identified in the data. Customers were given a voice and thus an opportunity to influence road management. The purchaser-provider split had also changed the conceptualisation of customer. Road-user customers were now their main customers, but they needed to operate in the same way with both road-user customers and service providers. They were thus conceptualised uniformly. This change changed the traditional understanding of the positions of participants in service provision.

The analysis did not reveal work-related conflicting situations. Also, the number of expanded customer quotations was low. These observations, along with the finding that the stabilising discourse was dominant among the interviewees, raise some questions. Is it the 'external' purchaser-provider split that has distanced the employees from their customers? And if it is, what does it mean in regard to customer orientation? In my view, the findings imply that despite the implemented strategies and guidelines, the customer approach may remain to some extent abstract in split organisations such as the Finnish Road Administration.

The Helsinki University Library

Descriptions of the technological tools used and future-oriented customer service dominated the customer discourse in the Helsinki University Library. In terms of the development of library work, systematic plans for automatization of library services go back to the 1970s. Digitisation, new e-tools, and new e-materials, for instance, have played a central role in the transformation of academic library service ever since. The first steps in implementing IT-based tools were taken in the 1980s and wide expansion of digitisation took place in the 1990s. The development affected not only working methods in academic libraries, but also library customers' needs, which expanded and led the way to new, but not yet necessarily identified, needs.

Expansion in customers' needs was expressed in the discourse on the use of e-material and new tools by different generations, which revealed the dynamics of the concept of customers. On the one hand, this included variation between the different generations in the use of both electric and printed material. On the other hand, interviewees brought up the future-oriented and young generation's capability in using e-tools. Generally future-oriented discourse was strong in the Helsinki University Library data, which in my view was a sign

of a development-oriented and dynamic understanding of library customers (Engeström 1987). The interviewees talked about 'still non-existing needs' of customers and 'non-existing tools' such as bibliometric tools. Also, worries in regard to responding to 'non-existing needs' of customers were expressed. The 'old' understanding of object of work and tools seemed to be called into question, and at least some of the library professionals were in the process of frequently reconceptualising their customers.

The findings revealed that principles of marketisation in the form of projectisation (Brunila 2011, p. 429) and internationalisation had spread to academic libraries through library customers. One specific characteristic of academic libraries is their close relation to universities and higher education institutions. Thus, increasing demands for internationalisation, efficiency, and productivity (and the pressures on universities to publish research papers in great quantity for prestigious journals) have affected library professionals' work. Such demands are indications of the New Public Management initiatives that have entered higher education and academic libraries since the 1980s (Kallio, 2014). Customers were not the only source of market-oriented practices for the Helsinki University Library, however. As the historical analysis in this study (Chapter six) revealed, it had also increasingly incorporated the New Public Management tools in its activities.

In regard to projectisation, a stabilising dimension in the expansion of customers was identified in the data. The findings suggested that because of emerging large research projects some customers were understood as partial, and detached from the whole rather than as a compact unity with other researchers. Such fragmented customership may hinder identification of customers' needs, since customers are 'multiple interconnected' (Engeström, Puoti, & Seppänen, 2003, p. 183) researchers with different goals, but with the same research object.

The projectisation described above had to some extent initiated conflicting situations in service encounters. Others identified conflicting situations concerning customers' needs (e-material quickly delivered to desks; bibliometric data that did not yet exist) to which librarians were unable to respond. Though the findings accorded with those identified in the City of Tampere and the City of Espoo, they seemed to be less critical in the library context. Rather, they appeared as modest tensions calling for future learning and service development with customers in order to re-construct and co-construct the object of work with customers. Re-construction of both customers and tools successfully revealed the change identified by librarians in researcher-student customers. Earlier, as described, such customers came to use library services with preliminary ideas and an understanding of their research objects. Now, customers tend to begin the research process more or less from scratch. The library organisation, therefore, faced the challenge of re-constructing their own working methods and the tools they provided to customers. For example, the library's own database Helka was challenged and increasingly replaced by Google tools in service encounters.

PART IV: DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

In the final part of the thesis, part IV, I summarise and discuss the findings of my study. In the tenth chapter I return to the research questions and empirical findings and discuss them in regard to their theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions. In the eleventh and final chapter I evaluate the research, research process, and related ethical issues.

10. DISCUSSION

The purpose of my study was to examine the concept of customer in four public sector organisations. Chapter Six presented a historical analysis of the generalisations concerning the customer concept as expressed by authorities in the organisations, as well as the interview analyses of employees' local interpretations of the customer concept. Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine presented the empirical findings. In this chapter I first discuss the findings by returning to the research questions. I then continue by presenting the methodological, theoretical, and practical contributions of the study. I end the chapter with concluding remarks and future implications.

10.1. Development of public sector customers

The objective of the analysis was, first, to follow how customers appeared and were introduced in the documents. Second, a methodological aim was to support the discursive interview data and provide a more concrete basis for the analysis. Thus, the interview analyses were conducted prior to the historical analysis and the findings from the interviews were utilised when analysing the documents. Methodological contributions will be discussed later in the Methodological and theoretical contributions section.

My first research question was:

How has the concept of customer historically developed in four public sector organisations?

The concept of customer evolved similarly in the documents in all four organisations despite the different fields of work and character of the organisations. In the 1980s customers appeared in the documents mainly abstractly, as numbers, and the word customer was rarely used. The Finnish Road Administration adopted the customer approach earlier than the other organisations, in the 1980s. The customer concept became more identifiable in the 1990s and was more intensively introduced in the documents in the 2000s. The use of the word customer was thus identified in all organisations, though it was not widely used in the day care context. In the Helsinki University Library the concept of customer as an object of work had evolved more slowly than in the other organisations.

Similar conceptions were identified in the interview analyses and the analysed documents. In the 1990s the conception of individuality appeared in the City of Tampere documents, while the Finnish Road Administration documents referred to participatory customers. Customers were to a large extent understood as active agents in the discourse in the 2000s, but especially the City of Tampere and the Finnish Road Administration also recognised customers as participatory and influential. In the City of Espoo expansion of customers toward networks and multiple service providers was identified.

A contextual and historical analysis showed how the discourse introduced, adapted and implemented the concept of customer in each organisation. Also, the documents demonstrated how intensively the concept evolved. The historical analysis revealed that the beginnings of the profound rise of the New Public Management in the 1980s were only minimally identified by the organisations in that decade. The language and implementation of the New Public Management as well as customer discourse, however, became more

frequent and identifiable in the following decades, especially in the 2000s. Similarly, expressions of customers as the object of work, in the way they are understood in this study, became richer and more identifiable in the 2000s. The findings, particularly in the elderly care and day care context, suggested that simultaneously with the New Public Management, humanistic and democratic approaches were increasingly represented in the evolving concept of customer.

The findings supported the hypothesis that the concept of customer had developed in the discourse in the studied organisations along with the introduction of the New Public Management approach, which reflected developments at a wider societal level. The concept of customer in the public sector, therefore, has not evolved on its own. Instead, the concept has cultural-historical roots and is part of the construction of the object of activity, which is closely related to the historical development of organisations and their political-ideological values and policies (see Pirkkalainen, 2003, p. 180).

Several researches have recognised the challenges regarding political-ideological values found in the New Public Management approach (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005; Emery & Giaque, 2005; Fountain, 2001; Richter & Cornford; Needham, 2006). The challenges concerned issues of rights, choice, responsibilities, and equality in public services, which are related to the relationship between citizenship and the customer approach. Newman and Vidler (2006) showed in their study that the shift from collective needs toward individual demand and choice was interpreted simplistically in the analysed policy documents regardless of its fundamental significance. The benefits of the business tools implemented in the public sector have been identified, such as the reduction of the one-sided power of government (du Gay, 1996). Now the issues of citizenship and business orientation, as well as political-ideology, need to be addressed and explored. In organisation studies, for example, political-ideology is often ignored or taken for granted as a context of the study. The historical analysis in this study identified, on the one hand, a simplistic shift towards market-oriented activities emphasising customers' influential and participatory role, and, on the other hand, a shift towards understanding customers as the object of work. Thus, the documents suggest that the New Public Management is rooted in ideas such as public choice, humanistic public administration and democratisation (Gruening, 2001).

The methodological salience of the historical and contextual analysis lies in its relation to the interview analyses, and allows for applying the principle of ascending from the abstract to the concrete (Il'enkov, 1977; Marx, 1867). Firstly, following this principle, a simplified and generalised understanding of customers was introduced in the documents. This generalisation was adopted from the New Public Management, but also to some extent from humanistic and democratic approaches.

Secondly, the interviews provided interpretations of official policies and policy documents, which revealed changes in the object and conflicts encountered in 'real world' and day-to-day work settings. Thus, movement can be seen here between 1) theories, ideologies, and concepts which are widely applied across a number of countries in the public sector, and their application as generalised concepts in local policies and policy documents; 2) local and contextual interpretations of concepts in use. I continue by responding to research questions two, three, and four and then discuss the findings of the interview analyses.

10.2. Changes in the object of work

In comparison with the historical analysis, the interview analyses provided a more profound understanding and interpretation of the concept of customer and changes in customers as the object of work. Several analytical tools and methods were utilised to analyse the interviews, which thus were considered as the main data of this study. The findings were reported in Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine, and all these chapters analysed the interviewees' expressed interpretations of customers as the object of work. Chapter Seven investigated general statements of customers, whereas Chapter Eight contextualised and integrated customers in a designated part of the organisations' activities: evaluation processes. In Chapter Nine the emphasis was on the changing character of customers as the object of work; this also included proactive and future-oriented conceptions. The findings of the analyses presented in each chapter were to some extent intertwined, and conflicting situations and temporal movement were identified throughout the data.

My second research question was:

How is the concept of customer conveyed in the discourse of public sector organisation employees?

Quantitative calculations suggested that dynamic discourse was dominant; thus, this indicates understanding customers as a concrete object of work. The Helsinki University Library was the only studied organisation in which the majority of customer discourse occurrences was dynamic. In the City of Espoo the emphasis was equally on dynamic and possibility discourse, whereas in the Finnish Road Administration the emphasis was on stabilising customer discourse. In the City of Tampere possibility discourse was dominant. These quantitative findings, however, provided only generalisations of the concept of public sector customer.

A qualitative analysis revealed the manifold way in which an understanding of customers was produced by using a variety of linguistic and thematic expressions. Customers were realised abstractly in the discourse by using linguistic cues revealing emphasis on organisational priorities, classification style, and decontextualisation. Thematic expressions abstracting customers revealed: an imbalance between the customers' and organisations' needs; a blurred division of labour regarding responsibilities; and a diminishing of customers' position in service provision. The stabilising discourse indicated organisations' alienation from customers and their needs in service encounters as well as repetition of the New Public Management discourse. The abstraction of customers was identified in rapidly implemented new concepts and tools, and organisational restructuring as a top-down process (Vygotsky, 1987; Engeström. et al. 2005).

Dynamic discourse was produced by using a variety of thematic expression and by contextualising customers temporally and locally in narratives. Future-oriented discourse was especially emphasised in the Helsinki University findings. Thematic expressions concerned understanding customers and employees as a unity, which influenced how services were developed, and interpretations of how the object of work had changed and customer focus had increased. Rich descriptions of customers as the object of work showed profound efforts in conceptualising the customer as 'real'.

The possibility discourse revealed movement and balancing between stabilising discourse and dynamic discourse, thus highlighting new possibilities for development of the concept. Such discourse was produced by utilising a number of thematic expressions regarding customers and customer encounters. Confusion was identified about who customers are, which resembled Paarlberg's (2007) findings regarding his study on customers in the New Public Management settings. Also identified was a novel understanding of personnel as a customer (du Gay, 1996). The analysis revealed manifold descriptions of conflicting situations concerning balancing between customers' needs and organisational resources and focus. Tensions between serving customers and being professional and the uncertainty of the boundaries of work tasks indicated conflicting situations. Similar findings were identified by Newman and Vidler (2006) in their study on customers in the New Public Management context in Great Britain. Such conflicting situations are manifestations of a contradiction, and they need to be explained by elaborating the initial contradiction (Il'enkov, 1977; see also Newman & Vidler, 2006).

My third research question was:

How are customers understood as evaluators of services conveyed in the discourse of public sector organisation employees?

Quantitatively examined the findings suggested that passive and stabilising customer discourses on evaluating customers dominated the data. Thus, the described integration of customers in evaluation processes was not optimal, either from the perspective of customers or that of employees. In the City of Espoo and the City of Tampere the emphasis was on passive and stabilising discourses. In the Finnish Road Administration the discourse appeared mainly as active and dynamic. Passive and stabilising discourses were absent in the findings from the Helsinki University Library; thus the emphasis was on active and dynamic discourses on customers.

Conceptualisation of customers was expressed by interviewees by using a variety of linguistic cues and thematic expressions. In the City of Espoo customers appeared in the discourse as both active and contextualised quality controllers and passive decontextualised evaluators of services. Occasionally, customers were hidden behind organisational priorities. A change from collecting feedback as numbers toward qualitative 'down to earth goals' was described, suggesting a conceptualisation of customers concretely rather than abstractly.

The findings in the City of Tampere showed that occasionally customers were given an active position in the discourse, but at the same time inadequate inquiries were explained as the reason for abstracting customers. Therefore, the object of inquiries seemed to be inquiries themselves rather than customers, which created conflicting situations in work practices. Similar findings were identified in the City of Espoo.

In the Finnish Road Administration the findings indicated that, on the one hand, customers were contextualised and given an active role as quality controllers, while on the other hand, they were given a passive role as being managed by the organisation. The analysis revealed tensions between the Finnish Road Administration, customers, and service providers. Customers' position was diminished through the service providers' business objectives of profit, which affected the customer focus.

The Helsinki University Library data was very small; only two quotations were identified as representing active and concrete discourse. Evaluation procedures were not discussed widely in the interviews, but linguistic cues suggested that customers had a position in building the library's customer-orientated practices.

The findings revealed aims toward integrating customers as active participants in end-product evaluations, which the New Public Management approach recommends focusing on. Some researchers have argued that issues of control have received increasing attention in regard to feedback and evaluation processes and that a return to Taylorism can be identified in regard to quality management (du Gay & Salaman, 1992; Lorentz, 2012, Patomäki, 2007; Vaara, 2004). Thus, in addition to using customers' evaluations as a tool to improve service, it can also be used as an instrument for control. Customers are therefore provided with a significant position in the exercise of power over employees, which blurs the boundaries between employees and customers. This study identified customers' position as active quality controllers. But customers were also abstracted from practice by being hidden behind organisational priorities and jargon, or even being controlled by the organisation. This finding implied the conceptualising of customers as in mass production: easily pleased 'passive recipients of services' instead of 'active, enterprising, searching, innovating, and forcing change customers' (du Gay & Salaman, 1992, p. 618). The purchaser-provider splits implemented and the use of external service providers strengthened the issues of control, but they also created new relationships between agents in regard to evaluation processes. Not only customers were given opportunities to exercise power over employees, but private sector service providers were also able to use their position for their own benefits and ignore customers to some extent.

The finding that evaluation practices and particularly evaluation tools were not purposeful and did not initiate actions to develop services revealed challenges in conceptualising customers as the object of work. Similarly, despite the discourse on participatory and influential citizens, such aims were not necessarily realised. A number of conflicting situations were described in regard to these findings, thus revealing challenges in conceptualising public sector customers within the framework of the New Public Management.

My fourth research question was:

What possibilities of expansion of the concept of customer can be detected in the discourse of the public sector organisation employees?

The fourth research question explored the dimensions of expansion of the concept of customers. The analysis suggested two dimensions illustrating the dynamics of the concept: social and temporal expansion. In regard to the quantitative calculations, occurrences of social and temporal expansion of the concept of customer were equal, but quantitative elaboration provided a variety of expressions regarding the concept.

Firstly, in the City of Espoo the social expansion of customers was expressed as expansion of individuals towards collective customers, including families and next to kin. Secondly, expansion was explained as multiple opportunities for customers to participate in and influence service provision. Thirdly, social expansion included the varied needs of customers due to multiple illnesses. Temporal expansion was described with the movement from past to present to future, movement between different customer generations, and movement on the care path between short-term and long-term care periods.

The data in the City of Tampere revealed the dimensions of expansion, which included the participation of families, the influence and participation of customers in service production, and personnel as customers. Temporal expansion was expressed as movement from past to present to future and movement between different customer generation.

In the Finnish Road Administration the social expansion of customers was realised in the discourse as expansion of road user customers toward multiple customer groups, and the expansion of customers to service providers. Temporal expansion appeared from past to present to future.

In the Helsinki University Library, social expansion appeared as the varied needs of customers due to digitalisation, interdisciplinarity, and internationalisation, and as fragmented customership. The temporal expansion was expressed as movement from past to present to future and movement between different generations. The library data revealed a substantial future orientation.

The analysis suggested that the expansion of customers in all the organisations studied was realised in the discourse in manifold ways, revealing the dynamic character of the concept and the dynamic understanding of customers as the object of work. Expansion from individual customers toward collective customers, and at the same time, expansion of customers' individual needs, demands, and opportunities to exercise influence were identified. Such findings reflected both the New Public Management ideology and the approaches of democracy. In the library context, expanded customers in the form of fragmented customership prevented rather than promoted approaching customers and their needs as a whole.

The analysis suggested new relationships and the blurring of traditionally understood internal and external participants in service provision. Employees were understood as customers of managers, which changed the relationship between participants in service provision. A similar change was identified regarding service providers as customers.

The temporal dimensions analysed revealed descriptions of how an understanding of customers as the object of work had changed, as well as how customers as the object of work had expanded. The findings suggested that both changes that have been beneficial for customers and changes that have caused frustration revealed the dynamic character of the customer concept. The descriptions of the temporal development of the concept following the New Public Management approach seemed to be continuing and affecting employees' work. The future prospects were to some extent related to reduced resources, but also to technological development. A number of conflicting situations were identified, which created tensions for employees in service encounters. The next discusses the conflicting situations identified in the interview analyses.

10.3. Conflicting situations

The analysis revealed a number of thematically described tensions and conflicting situations expressed by the interviewees. In cultural-historical activity theory, and thus in this study, tensions, conflicts, and disturbances are understood as manifestations of contradictions which trigger learning and development. Conflicts identified in empirical data can be interpreted with the help of the theoretical concept of contradiction (Il'enkov, 1977).

The interviews in the City of Espoo revealed a number of descriptions of conflicting situations regarding either service encounters or relations between customers and their relatives. Such situations were initiated by the greater opportunity of customers and/or their

relatives to exercise influence, as well as by the growing number of customers with multiple illnesses that are challenging for personnel working with insufficient resources. Similar findings regarding influential customers were reported, for instance by Newman and Vidler (2006). They identified, in the British health and social care context, tensions and conflicts occurring on a regular basis between customers and personnel regarding needs, wants, choice, and equity.

In the City of Tampere the conflicting situations concerned service encounters with parents and their better possibilities of influencing recruitment processes and the organisation of work. Considering the character of education professionals' work, constant interaction, negotiation, and dialogue between personnel and customers is required. New ideologies and concepts such as the New Public Management and educational partnership may challenge the dialogue and roles of care givers and parents; thus a balance between care participants is needed. In the Finnish context Helinko (2012, p. 15) and Kiesiläinen, (2004, p. 92) identified tensions rising easily when customers' wishes and demands contradicted day care professionals' viewpoints. From the perspective of citizenship, however, also opposing conflicts were identified. Citizens' possibilities of influencing decision-making the way it was presented in policies was not necessarily realised. Further, rigid organisational structures were described as challenging for satisfactory customer service and initiating tensions in work practices.

With the study design and method of analysis used, only a few conflicting situations were identified in the Finnish Road Administration. They concerned diminishing resources and profit-making of service providers, which is not an unusual finding in the context of contemporary public sector service provision.

In the Helsinki University Library conflicting situations were identified in regard to described service encounters with customers. Tensions between the professional identity of librarians and service orientation/customers were identified as well as customers' increased expectations of services that the librarians could not provide. A number of researchers have reported on changes in library work and the object of work. Firstly, librarians have increasingly become service providers and learning practitioners with the objective of serving customers (Brophy, 2007, p. 518; Lossau, 2007, p. 11; Simpson, 2007, p. 90). Secondly, moving from book-centric to customer-centric work has been identified (Scupola & Nicolajsen, 2010, p. 304), as well as the need to move from a mass production style of working towards more co-configuration service provision with customers (Engeström et al., 2012).

The findings in all the studied organisations suggested two lines of conflicting situations: one in regard to employees' encounters with customers, and the other concerning organisational structures, resources, tools, and division of labour. The source of the former can be traced to the fundamental contradiction between the private sector customer approach emphasising individual interests and choices and the public sector service user or citizen with collective aims. This contradiction between business logic and the public sector ethos and principles of democracy clash in the concept of public sector customer, confusing employees in service encounters. The latter lines of conflict reveal rigid organisational procedures in which old hierarchical or vertical structures and division of labour are dominant. It appeared that all organisations were undergoing a large change toward customer-orientation, yet struggling with their aims.

It can be argued that both lines of conflicting situations refer to a rapidly implemented and abstract customer approach that has been introduced to the organisations as a top-down process. The direction or movement of such change appeared to be 'from outside', but

something that could not be ignored by employees (see Pirkkalainen, 2004, p. 200). Further, introduction of the concept of customer and customer approach in the public sector has been adopted from the business sector, which has different philosophies guiding its activities. Several researchers have raised concern over such development in the public sector. The New Public Management has introduced fragmented and idealised models and practices from the private sector to the public sector, and generalised the enterprise form to public organisations despite the differences in their guiding philosophies (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005; du Gay 1996; Fountain, 2001). Such findings thus refer to an abstract generalised concept of customer which has been introduced to the organisations with no or minimal connection to the 'real' world (Il'enkov, 1977). In this study the generalised concept of customer has been enriched by elaborating its conveyance as expressed by employees and tracing the source of identified conflicts. The guiding principle has been ascending from the abstract to the concrete in conceptualising public sector customers.

The findings of the study and identified conflicting situations can be further explored with an activity system within the framework of developmental work research (Engeström (1987). Notable here is that since the objective of this study was to explore the concept of customer, and the analysis focused on the question of 'what a public sector customers is', conflicts and tensions were not analysed in this study as such (see, for example, Engeström & Sannino, 2011, Pereira-Querol, 2011, and Vainio, 2012). Instead, conflicting situations were identified when analysing the concept of customer and changes in the concept with a variety of analytical tools.

In developmental work research, methodology conflicts can be located within an element or between elements in an activity system, between old and new activity, and between the central and neighbouring activity systems. Contextual and organisation-specific conflicts and tensions are indications of secondary contradictions between different elements of an activity system (Engeström, 1987, p. 90).

In this study the identified conflicts and tensions are located between subject and object, subject and tools, subject and division of labour, as well as object and tools and object and division of labour. The subject here is employees and the object customers. Tools refer to methods of evaluation, principles guiding day-to-day practices, and strategies. Division of labour concerns how work and responsibilities are organised between participants in the service provision. Conflicts between employees and customers appeared as situations in which customers had the possibility of influencing the organisation of work practices and in which employees could not respond to customers' needs. Conflicts between employees and tools were identified as unsatisfactory tools to respond to customers' needs and wants, as well as the impractical evaluation tools implemented. Conflicts between employees and division of labour were realised as inflexible or blurred organisational structures preventing a satisfactory customer focus. Conflicts between customers and tools were conveyed as impractical evaluation tools. Further, the blurred division of labour created conflicts between customers and division of labour.

The analysis suggested that all organisations struggled to some extent with the new service and customer approach initiated by the New Public Management, which was an indication of conflicts (or tertiary contradiction; Engeström, 1987, p. 90) between the old activity and emerging new activity. The core of the contradiction, as has been identified earlier, can be found in the inherently contradictory concept of customer, which carries within itself both business logic and the public sector ethos with its democratic ideology.

Changes in the concept of customers and in the object of work affected the other parts of the activity systems.

The activity system as a unit of analysis is especially useful when comparing different organisations and changes encountered in organisations. In my study, major differences were not identified when analysing the organisations and their history. Thus, the findings were not discussed and presented visually by using an activity system of each organisation.

10.4. Shared discourses

The analysis did not reveal major differences in the comparison of the four organisations, but interestingly, a few shared discourses were identified in the interview data despite the different character of the organisations. By shared discourses I mean contextual and thematic similarities in utterances that were repeated in the discourse. Such findings support the understanding that the core of the studied phenomenon can be found outside of the organisations. It also reveals that not only the concept of customer but also the New Public Management approach is and has become a generalised norm in many public sector organisations.

First, the discourse of ‘customers do not care who provides or finances the services’ was identified in the City of Espoo and the Finnish Administration data. Such discourse is interesting in the sense that customers seemed to be diminished or even ignored to some extent. It was as if they were not in a position of giving their opinions, or of being interested in how services are arranged or tax income is used. Discussions in Finland, initiated by the discovery of unqualified health care professionals practising within the system, and calculations concerning the high costs of privately provided service, are signs that customers actually do care. In my view such discourse is a reflection of wider societal discourses rather than the interviewees’ own statements. Exploring the discourse in an activity system reveals tensions between employees and customers.

Second, the discourse of calling for boundaries for flexibility in service encounters was identified in the City of Espoo, the City of Tampere, and the Helsinki University Library. Comments such as, ‘*when the line does come*’, ‘*we always have to be more flexible... from morning to evening*’, ‘*when customers ask... It is kind of wasted work for us*’, and ‘*Then when does the line come?*’ were critical indications of the flexibility discourse. Others were more moderate statements concerning flexibility: ‘*But I don’t know if this goes beyond our services*’, ‘*here at our place it is very much tailored*’ and ‘*I don’t know if we need to do this or should we do*’.

In the New Public Management language, expansion of customers’ actions is expressed, for instance, by emphasising democratisation and the participation of citizens (Gruening, 2001), or personalised, responsive, and flexible services for customers (Rosenthal & Peccei, 2006; Emery & Giauque 2003). Fairclough (2000, p. 148), brought up the neoliberal discourse of flexibility and ‘the other of flexibility’ by which he referred, for instance, to the insecurity which is initiated by flexibility in work practices. Flexibility and insecurity concern not only employees, but also customers. In this data it seemed that, on the one hand, customers’ own customership had not developed to the level of being in balance with the organisations’ expectations. On the other hand, organisations had not provided tools to manage situations of insecurity and flexibility. Here the findings suggested tensions between employees and customers, but also tensions between employees and tools, which had not been developed in a satisfactory way.

The third shared discourse, the discourse of personnel as customers and the object of work was identified in the data of the City of Espoo and the City of Tampere. In my view this conceptualisation was a novel one, but du Gay, for instance, presented similar ideas in 1990s when writing about the customer culture in organisations (du Gay, 1996). In the interviews, managerial level representatives emphasised the position of personnel, highlighting their importance in providing good services for customers. '*Core of work, it is personnel*' and '*also our employees, they are in a sense also our customers*'. This finding interestingly conflicts to some extent with the argument that the New Public Management undermines employees in favour of customers and the organisational perspective (Kalliola & Nakari, 2006, p 35). The realisation of such discourse, however, could not be analysed in this study. The findings did not suggest conflicts between the elements of activity systems, but rather revealed that the blurred division of labour affected the relationship between customers and employees.

Summary

This study delineated evolvement of the concept of customer and understanding customers as the object of work in historical documents from four public sector organisations. The findings suggested a gradual appearance of the concept along with the increased introduction of the New Public Management approach. On the other hand, humanistic and democratic approaches can also be identified in the roots of the approach (Gruening, 2001). The historical documents provided a simplified and generalised introduction of public sector customers. The interviews revealed interpretations of the simplified and generalised introduction of the concept of customer that were implemented. They also showed the dynamic character of the concept of customers in manifold ways. Further, balancing was observed between understanding customers as the object of work and a stabilising conceptualisation of customers.

A number of conflicting situations were identified between employees, customers, the tools used, and the division of labour. Such conflicts were manifestations of the fundamental contradiction in the concept of public sector customer. The concept carries within it the contradiction between understanding customers in the way the business sector conceptualises them, and understanding them in the way humanistic and democratic approaches conceptualise them (see Kettunen & Möttönen, 2011; Needham, 2006). Shared discourses were also identified in the studied organisations, which is an indication that the New Public Management and the concept of customer have become a generalised norm in the public sector.

This study of public sector customers supported the understanding that the concept is multi-layered and that its introduction can initiate fundamental changes in regard to civil society. The strength of this study was the empirical and contextual introduction as well as interpretation of the public sector customers thus enriching the prevailing and opening up further discussions of the concept.

10.5. Evaluation of the study from theoretical and methodological perspectives

This study contributes to the discussion of public sector customers and concept formation in the framework of cultural-historical activity theory. The notion of object was the key concept with which expressions of customers were conceptualised and investigated. Initially, it was the first phase of reading the empirical data and the theoretical notion of object that led to an understanding of customers as the object of work. The principle of ascending from the abstract to the concrete was the guiding epistemology of the study.

The object under investigation, the concept of customer, was expressed in the discourse in manifold and sometimes opposing ways, which revealed the dynamic character of the concept. The dialectical ontological concepts in this study are understood as dynamic, constantly moving, and developing through contradictions. Not only contradictions, but also temporal changes are considered as revealing the dynamics and reconceptualising of the concept. The historical elaboration of the concept of customer and of the New Public Management approach suggested a number of similarities with the empirical findings in the data. The analysis revealed that customers as the object of work held in themselves a variety of theoretical assumptions, such as individuals having choice and influence in free markets, citizens in participatory democracy, and humanistic self-actualisation. These assumptions, however, are to some extent contradictory with each other and reveal the mixed values behind them.

According to the principle of ascending from the abstract to the concrete, the general abstraction in simplistic form is enriched towards full concrete diversity. The identification of a simplistic form is realised by identifying a germ-cell, which holds in itself a contradictory unity. Thus, instead of aiming to describe concepts' external qualities and classifying them in accordance with these qualities, the analysis went beyond such descriptions and classifications. In this study, the identified societal movement toward market-oriented public organisations, and the introduction of the concept of customer in the documents analysed provided the abstract generalisation of the concept. This generalisation was further enriched by investigating, with a variety of intermediate conceptual dimensions, how the concept of public sector customer was expressed in discourse. I do not, however, claim that I have provided a concrete and theoretical concept, since such theorisation calls for more empirical data and theoretical work. Rather the study opened up discussion and initiated steps towards a concrete conceptualisation of public sector customers.

The notion of contradiction is one of the key concepts in cultural-historical activity theory, and in the principle of ascending from the abstract to the concrete. Elaboration of contradictions and manifestations of contradictions remained to a certain extent limited in this study. Conflicting situations and tensions were not analysed as such, but they were identified when analysing the object with other intermediate conceptual dimensions. In the historical analysis, conflicts and tensions were not identified at all, and a theory-historical analysis (Engeström, 1987) was not conducted due to the character of the study, which comprised four organisations. There were neither the resources nor space for such analysis. The findings regarding conflicting situations, however, provided a solid understanding of interpretations and expressions of work practices regarding the concept of public sector customer. The conflicts were explained with the help of the theoretical notion of contradiction, which revealed the opposing ideologies in the concept.

Developmental work research methodology and activity systems were utilised in locating the conflicts and tensions between elements in the activity under study (Engeström, 1987). The main challenges were identified between subject, object, tools, and division of labour. It is worth noting here that the way I used the notions of contradiction and represented the identification of conflicting situation differ to some extent from developmental work research terminology. In this study, conflicting situations and tensions explained with the help of activity systems are manifestations of the contradiction between the business approach and the public sector ethos and approaches of democracy. The contradiction is embodied in the concept of customers. There are not, however, differences in understanding contradictions as source of change and development. Unlike many studies conducted in the framework of developmental work research, this study did not comprise Change Laboratory interventions (Engeström, 2007b; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) in which the formation of concepts and the expansion possibilities of concepts could have been followed in different activity systems. However, in my view one methodological contribution was elaboration of conflicts and contradiction, which can help practitioners conceptualise and reconceptualise their own work, and can lead way to learning and solving problems in work practices initiated by the customer approach. It is notable that not all conflicting situations could be traced to the customer approach, but it was not possible in this study to draw a clear distinction between those that could and those that could not.

Being committed to dialectical ontology, this study contributed to overcoming the dichotomy between the individual and societal by investigating the concept in its historical context and systematic whole instead of approaching it as a product of individuals. Such an approach also locates the identified conflicts and tensions in their systematic relationship, suggesting that those challenges experienced in work practices have roots in such relationships and not in individuals' actions. Individually focused approaches can be found, for instance, in a number of studies conducted in the disciplines of psychology and business management (see e.g. Korunka et al., 2007; Rod & Ashil, 2010). An individual approach in my view represents an abstract and partial conceptualisation of the object under study, and therefore remains detached from reality.

Individuals and their position in organisational settings, however, cannot be ignored. This brings us to one weak point in regard to the method used in this study. At the beginning of the interview analysis I made the decision to conduct the analysis so that interviewees were understood to represent the organisation, and their hierarchical position in the system was disregarded. The interviewees represented a variety of vertical and hierarchical positions in each of the organisations studied. During the course of the analysis this decision proved to be challenging, since some of the interviewees seemed to be balancing between customers and the organisational focus, which called for a more detailed positioning of employees and administrators in the analysis. Individuals' position in hierarchical systems in my view is likely to affect the interpretations they make regarding their own work and organisational processes. Yet, despite this challenge the strength of the interview analyses is the space given to multiple voices through the variety of interviewees representing different parts of the organisations. Also, the majority of interviewees represented grass-root workers in all the organisations except the Finnish Road Administration, because of its character as an administrative organisation.

In order to ascend from the abstract to the concrete, 'real' world experiences or expressions of such experiences are needed. In regard to concept formation, Vygotsky (1987) introduced the creative middle in which the top-down and down-top processes of

concept formation meet. In this study, employees' interpretations of customer encounters provided such down-top movement in customer understanding regardless of the above-mentioned lack of recognition of hierarchical and vertical positions. The New Public Management implementations and their introduction represented top-down processes which the interview had no or only limited ability to influence. Interplay between such movements guided the way toward a concrete and theoretical understanding of customers. Despite my own interpretation of such a creative middle, the analysis, however, can be questioned by the readers and I accept that.

All the empirical chapters explored a public sector customer as the object of work, how it was expressed in the discourse, and how it had developed historically. Language use in this study is understood as culturally and historically mediated. The data did not allow analysing and following an activity as such, but they were analysed in their cultural and historical context to avoid linguistic idealism and seeing discourse as 'a privileged' source of interaction (Engeström, 1999b, p. 169). The interview analysis was supported by: elaboration of the development of the customer concept within the framework of the New Public Management, a historical review of the fields of work of each organisation studied, and the historical document.

Finally, the novelty of the method used in analysing discourse in this study was the relationship between the conducted analyses. The interview analyses were conducted prior to the historical analysis. The findings regarding the customer concept in the interviews were then used as a tool in analysing the documents. It was therefore possible to create an interplay between the concept introduced in the documents and the concept interpreted in the interviews, and also to provide a more concrete ground for the study.

10.6. Evaluation of the study from a practical perspective

In this study, I opened up the history of the concept of customer in the framework of the New Public Management. I then discussed its introduction in organisational documents as well as employees' expressions and interpretations of the concept. The primary question in research work in general is whether the study has produced something new and applicable to give it societal significance. Silverman (2005, p. 229) addresses the salience of the contribution of research results from the perspective of practice and practitioners, clients and policy makers. Kvale (1995) writes about the practical validity of research, which refers to knowledge creation accompanied by actions or actual changes in behaviour. In regard to Kvale's argument, it was not possible for me to follow and report on possible changes or implications of my study, but I can recognise its importance in the field of working life studies.

In my view the contribution of my study lies in its efforts to further an understanding of the customer approach in the public sector and of the variety of ideologies and mix of values behind the approach. Thus, it also helps to understand the wider societal processes underway in our society and how they are connected to daily work practices and problems in service encounters. I am confident that my study has provided useful practical tools for public organisations to reflect on and evaluate whether, for example, their strategies and rules support the customer approach and the employees working with customers on a daily basis. Further, the systemic approach of this study shows that the identified conflicts and tensions in work practices have systemic origins and cannot be traced to individuals and individual working methods. Thus, in order to solve problems such as those discussed in this study, an analysis at a broader and systemic level is needed.

Finally, I want to mention that already in the early process of the study I observed that when presenting my research plan the audience found the perspective of employees to some extent novel in regard to customer conceptualisation. Combined with the argument that empirical studies concerning employees in the framework of the New Public Management and marketisation are few (Karsio & Anttonen, 2013, pp. 85-86; Thomas & Davies, 2005, p. 683), I am convinced that this study has the potential to provide new knowledge for adoption in public organisations. In my view this study opens up learning challenges for managers, administrators, and grass-root workers in public organisations, but also for customers and citizens.

10.7. Future implications

I will now highlight some aspects regarding conceptualisation of public sector customers, which need more elaboration in future studies. First, one disadvantage of my study was that it did not comprise formal intervention sessions, which would have provided a more solid foundation for investigating the concept and its usage and development in practice. In my view there is a need for such research in the future. Second, as I indicated earlier, when studying work practices in organisational settings it would be important to recognise hierarchical structures and the positions of the participants. They are likely to affect constructed interpretations and discourses and therefore should be analysed in more detail in future studies on public sector customers. My study failed to a large extent to address hierarchical positions, even though the data was collected from a variety of vertical and hierarchical levels. The interviewees were rather abstracted into a group of people participating in service productions. Third, one disadvantage of my study was that it did not examine in more depth the different meanings of the terms client, service-user, and citizen, for instance. They were rather pulled together and equalised with the concept of customer leaving the findings to some extent abstract. Fourth, the variety of conflicts and tensions that became evident should be explored more profoundly in future studies. In the cultural-historical activity theory framework, for instance, a number of analytical tools have been created for such an analysis to provide broad understanding of the subject under study. Fifth, the findings in this study revealed changes and development in relationships between different participants in service provision, mainly between employees and customers, even though they were not analysed as such. The analysis, however, suggests that there is a place for such investigation in the future, which in my view is empirically important and theoretically very interesting.

Furthermore, my study enriched previously conducted studies on public sector customers, and opened up new dimensions, which demonstrated the dynamics of the concept. The study revealed that within the boundaries of the concepts of business customer and public sector service user/citizen, a new concept of public sector customer or 'the New Public Management customer' is emerging. This concept carries in itself a variety of tensions between: rights and responsibilities, individuals and collectives, organisational customers and individual customers, influence and insecurity, and serving orientation and professionalism. The study did not, however, provide clear suggestions on which direction or how the concept is expected to develop or should be developed. Vigoda (2002), for instance, argued that citizens should be not understood as passive and one-directional receivers of services (customers) whose needs civil servants respond to. Instead, they should be understood as being in active collaboration with public organisations in the future. In my

study, there were indications that in the future customers as the object of public sector services will be more multidimensional, complex, and fragmented than they have been previously. The findings also revealed a readiness among employees to re-conceptualise the concept of public sector customers along with the identified future challenges. Further, my interpretation is that market-oriented discourse dominated the data compared with democracy and public sector ethos discourse. Whether the dominance is going to change or not is difficult to predict based on the findings of this study. To conclude, there is a need for studies that will continue to empirically and theoretically explore the concept of public sector customer, particularly in the Finnish context.

11. REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, I reflect on the research process and myself as a researcher. Also, I evaluate the quality of the study and discuss validity, reliability, as well as ethical and moral issues mainly based on the works of Kvale (1995) and Silverman (2005).

The research process

My professional background is in business and adult education. Prior to research work I worked in administration in a number of organisations in the private, third, and public sectors. When joining the research project, I was a novice as a researcher and had no particular experience in the fields of work under study. Now, reflecting back on these years, participating in two long-term research projects as well as writing this dissertation have been extremely interesting and demanding learning process. I have gradually started to construct a researcher identity thanks to the opportunities to participate in empirical data collection, work with practitioners in the field, and acquire tools for theoretical thinking with the support of the research community CRADLE.

My research career began in 2004 when I was recruited to the project *Options of privatization and shared responsibility: organisation of work and mastery of change in new hybrids of private and public sectors*. Later, in 2010, I joined a development project *Knotworking in the Library*. Prior to the Knotworking project I had for some time struggled with the focus of my dissertation, but the project offered me the missing link: focusing on the concept of customer.

The beginning of my dissertation process, as I see it, was typical, and similar to many novice researchers. My data were extensive and I had a number of grandiose ideas about which 'path' to follow in order to create something theoretically and societally important and magnificent. Thus, I was for some time stuck in what Silverman (2005, p. 80) called 'the kitchen sink approach', with research questions that were too wide-reaching to answer. I was, however, saved from drowning in the sink because of four reasons: 1) the years I had spent working in research and the university context increased my understanding of my study and research generally, 2) the Knotworking project helped me to focus on the customer aspect, 3) support from my supervisors, who wisely directed me towards a reasonable and manageable study, and 4) especially discussions with my colleagues.

In evaluating the study I focus on two aspects: 1) how reliable and valid are the methods and interpretations 2) how does the research process consider ethical and moral issues? The concepts of validity and reliability can be understood as 'indicators' of the quality of the research, which are adopted from the positivistic and quantitative research tradition. Their applied use in qualitative research is currently under debate, but I found it useful to proceed 'the traditional way' by using the commonly known concepts in reflecting on the study. I consider the concepts as structuring an evaluation of the process and thus perhaps making reading easier for readers. It is worth noting here that my understanding of qualitative research is such that interpretations of research findings are not objective, but rather subjective assumptions of researchers.

Validity

Validity is a synonym for the word truth (Silverman 2005, p. 210), which raises an epistemological question about what truth is and what it is in qualitative research. Becker (2001, p.317) finds the question of truth in qualitative research 'an odd question' and claims that qualitative and quantitative research are both based on similar epistemological arguments in explaining how society works.

My approach to validity in qualitative research is that instead of claiming to 'reproduce the object of the study completely' (Becker, 2001, p. 326) I have aimed to open up the analysis and the interpretations I have made during the research process. This can be done, for instance, by being critical, questioning, and producing theoretical questions (Kvale, 1995).

In the following, I reflect on the data and the analysis process. As the aim of the study was to conceptualise customers in the public sector from the perspective of employees, an obvious choice for me was to use empirical interview data and analyse talk. The number of interviews (53) with people presenting multiple viewpoints was substantial, and provided the required amount of discourse of customers for one thesis. Also, multiple viewpoints were represented in the study. This gave a voice to people from different areas of activities. I could have extended the data to include development sessions which consisted of more varied participants, but considering the number of interviews the data for the analysis would have grown to be too extensive.

In regard to the data collection and management, all the data was audio recorded and transcribed, and the analysis was conducted with the help of the ATLAS.ti 6 programme. The analysis was not a selective analysis, but a comprehensive one (Silverman, 2005, p. 214), since all the data were included in the analysis. I tried to highlight the most representative excerpts to open up my interpretations for the readers. I also provided very detailed information about the tools created for the analysis and how the analysis proceeded, and also quantitative numeric tabulation to facilitate the reading. The use of tabulations and calculations is part of analysis, and strengthens the validity of the research (Silverman, 2005, p. 219). In my study, which comprised four different organisations, the tables made it possible to compare the findings. The constant comparative method for validation (*ibid.*, p. 213) was inherent in the data even though the study itself was not a comparative study. The tabulations I used complemented the qualitative analysis, but also structured the reporting. One more aspect that Silverman brings up in evaluating qualitative research is deviant-case analysis, which means 'seeking out and addressing anomalies or deviant case' (*Ibid.*, p. 215). From this perspective I was not quite satisfied with my analytical tools. In some phases of the analysis I was looking for a method that would provide tools for conceptualising customers and reveal the conflicting aspects, but I did not find any that were applicable to my study the way it was designed. I was, however, able to point out conflicting situations and explore them with the theoretical notion of contradiction.

Kvale (1995) considers validation as being constituted through a dialogue. From this point of view the validity of my research can be questioned. I did not have a chance to use the method of member validation (Bloor, 2001) or what Kvale (1995) calls communication validity: presenting and discussing the findings with those who were studied. Still, it does not mean that my research is 'false' or not accurate. In the City of Tampere and the Helsinki University Library cases, for instance, the interviews were part of so-called mirror data, which were used in the development sessions. The mirror data is a set of excerpts of interviews conducted prior to the sessions and shown to the participants during the sessions

to stimulate discussion. In that sense part of the analysed data was under reflection. Also, Silverman (2005, p. 212) does not consider communication validity, or what he calls respondent validation, a guaranteed method for validation of the study.

I had no prior professional knowledge of or work experience in the fields of the studied organisations. From the validity aspect this can be an advantage or disadvantage. Being involved and having long-term experience or expertise in the area of the study can strengthen the validity of the research, but it can also provide narrow and limited research results (Silverman 2005, pp. 71 -72; see also Pirkkalainen 2003, pp. 203-204). In my view, because I worked in the projects and partly during the analysis with senior researchers and persons who were familiar with the context, my lack of experience did not decrease the validity of the study. I leave the validity judgements for readers to make based on the facts and data presented. What I can do is to emphasise that my own knowledge of the studied organisations and studied concept has increased enormously during the research process.

When assessing the research process afterwards, I felt that the beginning of the analysis conducted by thematic categorisation was somehow problematic and excluded some essential aspects from the analysis. I consider that my position as a novice researcher led to such a decision, which may not be very unusual. When starting the analysis I felt that thematic categorisation was needed in the early phase in order to manage the huge data. However, I want to emphasise that one individual study such as this one is not expected to provide all the information on a phenomenon or the whole truth of something.

Reliability and generalisation

The issues of reliability can refer to the consistency of the research findings (Kvale 1995, p. 235) or 'to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions' (Silverman, 2005, p. 224). The use of such reliability evaluation can also be questioned in certain theoretical and methodological approaches (Pirkkalainen, 2003, p. 205).

My data were collected between 2004 and 2011, which provides a reasonably long term for a study. This also means that the analysis phase was spread out several years. For instance, the actual 'customer' coding was conducted within about 19 months between 2009 and 2011. Since the period was rather long, the coding and interpretations done at the beginning of the process varied compared to the previous ones. I also noticed how my understanding matured during the long research process. For instance, reflecting on the beginning of the process, I might have built up different kinds of analytical tools or I might have made different interpretations.

Unfortunately, I did not write a research diary (Silverman 2005, pp. 249-251) with the aim of recording the learning processes and reflecting on them during writing of the thesis. Without a doubt, my development can be identified in the writings and drafts I produced, but analytically it would be too difficult to trace it from such material. Instead of a research diary, however, I had thorough metadata documents, which included detailed and easily accessible information on the collected data. According to Silverman, metadata documents are part of a research diary (Silverman, 2005, p. 251). One method of validation would have been to conduct a comparative analysis, i.e. another researcher conducting some part of the analysis in order to see whether the two analyses are consistent. I had no possibilities for conducting such an analysis, but I went through a few samples of the data with my supervisors. However, in regard to qualitative research, I would not rely extensively on the consistency of an analysis conducted by the same researcher at different times or conducted

by different researchers. What I found purposeful and tried to do was to open up the analysis with excerpts showing the consistency of *my* analysis with reliable methods during *that time in that context*.

The issues of generalisations are also questioned in the qualitative research tradition (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Generalisation can mean a way to generalise research findings to a certain population or group, from one context to another. Or it can mean that concepts and definitions are abstracted to universal principles without practical connections (Pirkkalainen, 2003, p. 205). In this study the data were collected in four different kinds of organisations. This provided findings, such as shared discourses, that can be generalised to some extent, yet connected to reality.

Ethical and moral issues

In Finland, research ethics have become an increasingly important issue in academic communities since the end of the 1980s and the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity was founded in the 1990s (Löppönen & Vuorio, 2013). The advisory board has published several guidelines, the latest of which was published in 2012: *Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland*. The guidelines are consistent with equivalent international guidelines such as *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* (European Science Foundation ESF & ALL European Academies ALLEA 2011) and *Singapore Statement on Research Integrity* (World Conference on Research Integrity 2010, Singapore).

The guidelines (The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity, 2012, pp. 30-31) include nine premises for the responsible conduct of research. Some might not consider this as the place to introduce details of such premises. But since I consider ethical and moral issues of central importance in academic practices I chose to present a scrutinised version of the premises. Readers can therefore reflect on them as well as evaluate my study based on the presented premises:

- The research follows the principles that are endorsed by the research community: integrity, meticulousness, and accuracy in conducting recording, presenting, and evaluating the research and results.
- Data acquisition, research methods, and evaluation conform to scientific criteria and are ethically sustainable. When publishing, the results are communicated in an open and responsible fashion.
- The researcher takes due account of the work and achievements of other researchers by respecting their work, citing their publications appropriately, and by giving their achievements the credit and weight they deserve in carrying out the researcher's own research and publishing its results.
- The researcher complies with the standards set for scientific knowledge in planning and conducting the research, in reporting the research results and in recording the data obtained during the research.
- The necessary research permits have been acquired.
- All parties within the research project (the employer, the principal investigator, and the team members) agree on the researchers' rights, responsibilities, and obligations, principles concerning authorship, and questions concerning archiving and accessing the data.

- Sources of financing, conflicts of interest or other commitments relevant to the conduct of research are announced to all members of the research project and reported when publishing the research results.
- Researchers refrain from all research-related evaluation and decision-making situations, when there is reason to suspect a conflict of interest.
- The research organisation adheres to good personnel and financial administration practices and takes into account the data protection legislation.

I have briefly described the ethical issues in Chapter Five, in which I presented the processes of data collection and data management. Here, I reflect on the above premises and how they have been realised or taken into account in my study.

As part of an established research community, I adopted responsible working methods throughout the research project. Research permits were systematically acquired in the organisations in which they were needed. Information on the background of the study as well as the source of finances was communicated openly to those who participated in the project. Prior to conducting the interviews I emphasised that the interviews would be treated with high confidentiality and interviewees would be anonymous in the coming presentations and publications. All the participants were aware of the academic use of the data. The students who collected the data in the City of Espoo were provided with these instructions, too.

All the interviews were transcribed by our research assistants who were aware of and understood issues of confidentiality in regard to research material. The original data in the form of audio and video recordings were stored in a locked storage room with other confidential material. The transcriptions were archived in an external hard drive to which the access was limited and I was the main user. In regard to any pictures I have published or video clips I have presented outside of the projects, I have always asked for permission separately from the persons performing in the material.

However, issues concerning team members' rights, responsibilities, and copyright were not discussed prior to conducting the projects. I consider these topics important and relevant, and they need to be discussed and agreed on collectively in future research projects.

In my view, ethical issues have become more important in research and academic work due to corporatisation and management by results procedures, which emphasise quantity rather than quality of research results (Kallio, 2014), or end-product rather than processes (Edwards & Daniels, 2012). For instance, researchers are under pressure to search for financing and to produce a large number of publications. This can create the temptation to publish 'false' or manipulated research findings (Ioannidis, 2005). Also, increasing the collective, research group style of working may blur the boundaries of rights and responsibilities. The recently founded Meta-Research Innovation Center at Stanford: Advancing Research Excellence (METRICS) has identified the new challenges in research work and aims to contribute to the quality of scientific investigation and maximise the positive impact of research. In regard to my research, I am confident that I have conducted the analysis carefully and not taken short cuts in order to produce results that suit me. I have also been attentive toward my research fellows in the research community in the sense that I have been careful to follow citation policies and I have acknowledged those who have participated in the research project. I have tried to overcome unnecessary introversion by

speaking openly about the background of my research when presenting it in public. In the future, I intend to apply the above premises in my research practice and also communicate them among my research colleagues.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Interview themes in The City of Espoo

1. What is your name, duties at work and how long have you been working in the City of Espoo/firm/association and in what kind of tasks? How long have you worked in the area of elderly care?
2. Can you describe what kind of organisation the City of Espoo and especially the elderly care/firm/association is?
How would you describe its activity locally (for instance, what kind of co-operation do you have locally)?

How has the local agency developed?

How would you describe national (or global) co-operation?

What kind of development have you noticed in co-operation?
3. How would you describe the core of your work and for whom you do it?
Can you describe changes in the core of your work during the time you have been working in the City of Espoo/firm/association?

Can you think of any turning points that have changed the activity, for example, in relation to products or services, colleagues, customers or tools?

How about in relations to others working in the same field?
4. In regard to changes in the city and work practices. Thinking afterwards:
On what basis do you think the final decisions were made?

What issues should have been paid more attention to, or how would you advise others?

How could you have prepared yourself for these issues beforehand? Or could you have?
5. Future
What do you think will happen in regard to your core activities in the future?

How could you and your organisation prepare yourselves for the future? Have you done something?

Appendix 2.

Interview themes in The City of Tampere

Civil servants

1. Tell me about your background: what is your current work, your work history and educational background? How long have you been working in the City of Tampere?
2. Based on your understanding and experience, describe the advantages and disadvantages of the New Management Model:
 - a) from the point of view of inhabitants
 - b) from the point of view of personnel
 - c) from the point of view of elected (city council, city government, committees)
3. The new management model, including the purchaser-provider split, is argued for as follows (PAPER SHOWN), and it has three main goals (PAPER SHOWN). What do you think of these arguments?
How do you think the division of purchaser and provider has proceeded in practice and everyday work?

What have been the main challenges so far?

How about the most positive impacts?
4. What do you think of the contracts connected to the purchaser-provider split?
What kinds of contracts are made at different levels?

How are contracts negotiated? Who are the participants? Etc.
5. Can you tell how activity in different parts of the organisation is evaluated? What are the tools used in evaluation?
Who is responsible for the evaluation?

What do you think are the challenges connected to the contracting and evaluation of activity?
6. As early as the beginning of the 1990s the City of Tampere planned to implement the purchaser-provider split, but the plans were not realised.
Do you know anything about this?

What do you think has changed now that the model has been implemented in the whole organisation?
7. How would you describe the connection between the purchaser-provider split and process thinking?
8. How do you see the future of the New Management Model?
What do you think are the main problems? What do you think are the main benefits?

Elected officials

1. Tell something about your political activity: how long have you been involved actively in municipal politics, what is your political background, are you a member of the city council
2. Based on your understanding and experience, describe the advantages and disadvantages of the New Management Model:
 - a) from the point of view of inhabitants
 - b) from the point of view of personnel
 - c) from the point of view of elected officials (city council, city government, committees)
3. The new management model, including the purchaser-provider split, is argued for as follows (PAPER SHOWN), and it has three main goals (PAPER SHOWN).
What do you think of these arguments? How do you see the difference in political steering between purchasing and providing committees and boards? What kind of functional differences have you noticed in committee work in the new management model? How do you think the activity will develop in the future?
4. What do you think of the contracts connected to purchaser-provider split?
What kinds of contracts are made at different levels?

How are contracts negotiated? Who are the participants? Etc.
5. Can you tell how activity in different parts of the organisation is evaluated? What are the tools used in evaluation?
Who is responsible for the evaluation?

What do you think are the challenges connected to contracting and evaluation of activity?
6. As early as the beginning of the 1990s the City of Tampere planned to implement the purchaser-provider split, but the plans were not realised.
Do you know anything about this?

What do you think has changed now that the model has been implemented in the whole organisation?
7. How would you describe the connection between the purchaser-provider split and process thinking?
8. How do you see the future of the New Management Model?
What do you think are the main problems? What do you think are the main benefits?

Employees

1. Describe your work and work experience in the City of Tampere or some other municipal employer.
2. Based on your understanding and experience, describe the advantages and disadvantages of the New Management Model:
 - a) from the point of view of inhabitants
 - b) from the point of view of personnel
 - c) from the point of view of elected officials (city council, city government, committees)
3. The new management model, including the purchaser-provider split, is argued for as follows (PAPER SHOWN), and it has three main goals (PAPER SHOWN). What do you think of these arguments? How can you see them at your workplace?
4. What do you think of the contracts connected to the purchaser-provider split?
What kinds of contracts are made at different levels?

How are contracts negotiated? Who are the participants? Etc.
5. Can you tell how activity in different parts of the organisation is evaluated? What are the tools used in evaluation?
Who is responsible for the evaluation?

What do you think are challenges connected to contracting and evaluation of activity?
6. As early as the beginning of the 1990s the City of Tampere planned to implement the purchaser-provider split, but the plans were not realised.
Do you know anything about this?

What do you think has changed now that the model has been implemented in the whole organisation?
7. How would you describe the connection between the purchaser-provider split and process thinking?
8. How do you see the future of the New Management Model?
What do you think are the main problems? What do you think are the main benefits?

Attachment of the interview themes

The New Management Model in the City of Tampere 2007

The City Council Seminar of the New Management Model, 20 April 2005

The New Management Model Committee, 18 April 2005

Argumentation for future challenges, which are:

Constant growth in service demand

Aging population

High retirement rate of municipal employees

Reasserting the citizens' confidence in the political system

The goal is:

Strengthening of political decision making

The aim is to strengthen the position of the City Council and elected officials' decision making. Another goal is clarifying the division of labour between political leadership and civil servant management as well as the division of tasks between purchasers and providers in political decision making.

Improving efficiency of service provision:

The starting point is the principles of customer orientation and process thinking. Seeking alternative ways of service production is one tool for efficiency. Another tool is possibilities for service providers to concentrate on the core work, which leads to centralisation of support services. Division of purchasers and providers is an essential tool, without which the new management model cannot succeed.

Strengthening of strategic management

This includes strengthening corporate management and renewal of corporate administrations, strengthening the role of ownership steering, and increasing the city council's strategic power. Also, the city's strategic management system is being developed.

Appendix 3.

Interview themes in the Finnish Road Administration

The first round

1. What is your name, duties at work and how long have you been working in FINNRA?
2. Can you describe what kind of organisation FINNRA is?
 - a. How would you describe its activity locally (for instance, what kind of co-operation you have locally)?
 - b. How the local agency has developed?
 - c. How would you describe national (or global) co-operation?
What kind of development have you noticed in co-operation?
3. How would you describe the core of your work and for whom you do it?
 - a. Can you describe changes in the core of your work during the time you have worked in FINNRA.
 - b. Can you think of any turning points that have changed the activity, for example, in relation to products or services, colleagues, customers or tools?
 - c. How about in relations to others working in the same area?
4. You told about earlier changes. Thinking afterwards:
 - a. On what basis do you think the final decisions were made? What issues should have been paid more attention to, or how would you advise others?
How could you have prepared for these issues beforehand? Or could you have?
How have you prepared yourself?
5. Future
 - a. What do you think will happen in regard to your core activities in the future?
 - b. How could you prepare yourself for the future; have you done something?

The second round

1. What is your name, duties at work and how long have you been working in this organisation?
2. Could you describe what the difference in financing is between the Lahti motorway private financing initiative and the Lohja motorway life cycle model
3. One argument for Public Private Partnership initiatives is quality, risk management, customer orientation and innovation. What is your opinion of these?
4. What does risk management mean in practice?
What kind of mechanisms can be used in contracts to control risk management?

Can you see any risks that FINNRA was not prepared for in risk management? What could or should be done to be prepared?
5. What other kinds of financing models are used in FINNRA?
6. What clauses would be essential in new kinds of financing contracts?

What are the critical points in making contracts?

What is a good or bad contract?
7. How have the new purchasing and financing procedures affected the requirements for employees' know-how?
8. Have there been changes in the state authority functions?
9. How would you describe the changes in FINNRA due to the implementation of the purchaser-provider split? And what are the reasons for the change?

Appendix 4.

Interview themes in the Helsinki University Library

1. Own library career

How long is your library career and what kind of work tasks have you had?

Why did you choose to work in a library?

What or what kind of phases can be found in your library career?

How would you describe the current development phase of library work?

How would you describe your own know-how as a librarian? What kind of professional identity do you have? What kind of know-how challenges do you have in relation to the library's development strategy?

How do you see the change in library work? How would you evaluate the current division of labour at work?

2. Information management

With what kind of material do you work with? What special characteristics does the material in humanities and social sciences have?

Tell me about one of the very challenging problems connected to the material you work with.

How do you see the availability of information? Do you co-operate with international social networks? In what way?

How do open access of publications and digital archiving services affect your work?

3. Future

How do you see the future publishing channels?

How do you see the challenges in library work? How do you aim to meet the challenges? Can you see any threats in the future?

Nowadays the Academy of Finland requires a data management plan for research projects; will this affect you in the future?

How do you think the Tuhat research data base affects your work?

What do you think is the core of library work today? What is the main object of library work?

Appendix 5. The number of coded customer quotations in each organization

	Espoo	Tampere	FINNRA	Library
Active, independent customer	22			
Customer as an object of evaluation	17			
Customer as a whole	43	10		
Customer as an object of work	51	34	34	8
Customer as an object of fragmented work	36			
Expanded customer	29	4	4	8
Customers needing more care	14			
Equal customers	13	8		
Increasingly demanding customers	12	16		5
Individual, responsible customer	30			
Customer as evaluator	10	12	17	2
Customers having influence		13		
Purchaser customer		4		
Personified customer				2
Passive customer				3
Traditional customer				5
Pioneer customer				7